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10-point deficit
in Big 12 opener



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Strange Brew

Slow-starting Huskers come to life on day filled with upsets



Brian Hill

CONSTANT UPDATES filtered through the Memorial Stadium press box. Colorado had knocked off No. 3 Oklahoma in Boulder, and Kansas State was in the process of shocking No. 7 Texas in Austin. That's certainly not the way the two Big 12 Conference powers figured to go into this week's Red River Shootout.

And there were others on the last weekend of September. Auburn defeated No. 4 Florida, South Florida upended No. 5 West Virginia, and Maryland stopped No. 10 Rutgers. Four other teams in the top 25 were to lose on what was being dubbed "Upset Saturday."

So maybe it wasn't a huge surprise when the early score from Lincoln was relayed around the country: Iowa State 10, Nebraska 0.

A week after the Huskers outscored Ball State 41-40, it looked like they were going to be on the ropes again, but NU turned to some unlikely sources to take command on a wacky, wind-swept Saturday afternoon.

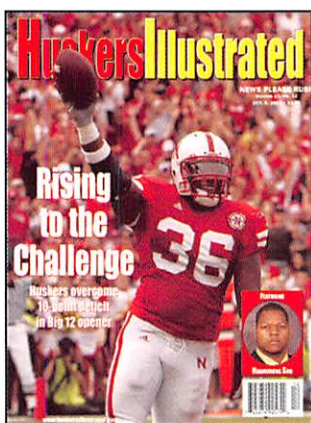
Junior fullback Thomas Lawson, who did not have a pass reception in his Husker career, caught not just one but two touchdown passes. Senior linebacker Bo Ruud returned an interception 93 yards for a touchdown, his second TD in as many games. And senior tight end Sean Hill, who did not have a reception entering this season, caught his third touchdown pass in the last two games, this one thrown by junior running back

Marlon Lucky.

Oh, by the way, Lucky also scored on a 41-yard run as Nebraska took a 21-10 lead less than a minute into the second half on the way to a 35-17 victory in the Big 12 opener.

NU's much-maligned defense came through with several big plays, including Ruud's interception and two interceptions by senior cornerback Cortney Grixby. The boos from a week earlier were replaced partly by "Sooooos," when sophomore nose tackle Ndamukong Suh recorded a crushing tackle and a sack.

Suh is the subject of our feature story in this edition of Huskers Illustrated.



Hill, who now leads the team in touchdown receptions with three, is featured in "10 Questions." There is much, much more, including volleyball, basketball and golf.

And, of course, we have a look ahead to the showdown with Missouri Saturday night in Columbia. Many projected that game would decide the Big 12 North, but the surprising victories by Colorado and

Kansas State indicate it might be a wide-open race.

Mizzou had the week off and will be playing its conference opener against a Nebraska team still searching for its identity. The Huskers ended up winning handily over 1-4 Iowa State but it was a struggle early, to say the least. NU committed two turnovers and ran just six offensive plays with the wind in the first quarter. The only first down in the opening quarter came on a 60-yard pass from Sam Keller to Frantz Hardy to the ISU 4. The drive ended on a fumble.

Defensively, the Huskers allowed 415 total yards, but it came on a whopping 102 plays. By comparison, the Huskers ran 59 plays and had 369 yards. ISU also finished with a huge edge in time of possession, 39:12-20:48.

Very strange indeed, but it was that kind of a day. ■

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HI Online

www.huskersillustrated.com

E-Mail Addresses

Editorial: hieditor@aol.com
Advertising: tfrancis@cni.com

ON THE COVER

Junior fullback Thomas Lawson celebrates after scoring the first of his two receiving touchdowns to give Nebraska the lead for good at 14-10 with 1:08 remaining in the first half. Cover photo by Scott Bruhn.

Huskers Illustrated

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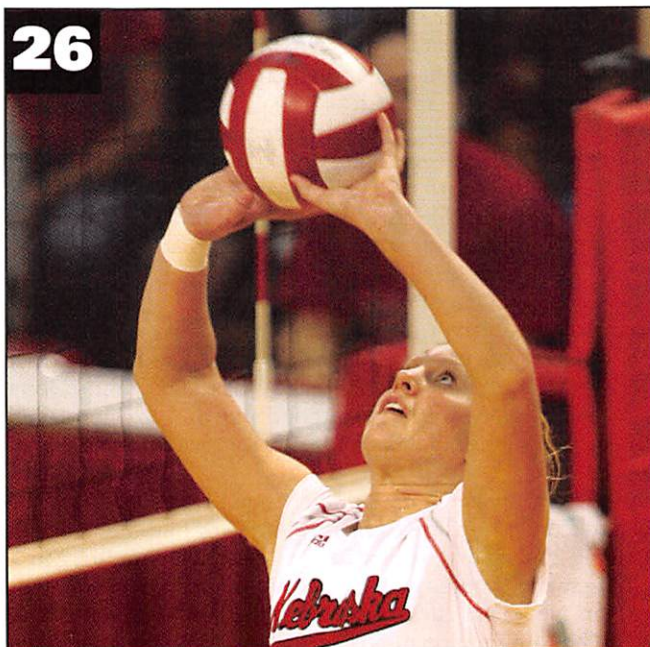
Parents often complained to the referee. Ndamukong Suh came to expect the questions about his age. He was always big, even when he was little, he said, sounding a bit like baseball Hall of Famer, and noted semanticist, Yogi Berra. *By Mike Babcock*

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It's Always 'The Catch'

Davison says it's a lot better to be remembered for catching one than dropping one



Terry DOUGLASS

REGARDLESS OF WHERE HE TRAVELS in the state of Nebraska, Matt Davison will never be able to outrun "The Catch."

Davison's place in Cornhusker history shadows him almost everywhere he goes. Certainly, such a claim to fame isn't a bad thing, but the former Nebraska wide receiver sometimes hopes it's not the only thing most people remember him for — even though he knows otherwise.

"To this day, I don't go two days without talking about that play," said Davison, who now works as a television and radio analyst for Nebraska football and basketball games. "I do a lot of speaking around the state and one of the things I'll do as a joke is challenge the crowd to name one other play that I made in my career.

"A lot of times, nobody can do it."

But don't think for a minute that Davison is complaining.

"That's a good thing," said Davison, who ended his career second on Nebraska's all-time receiving charts with 93 catches for 1,456 yards. "It's a lot better to be remembered for catching one than dropping one."

Davison, who still holds NU's single-game receiving yardage record with 167 yards against Texas A&M in 1998, is continually amazed at how vividly people seem to remember his signature play. That's impressive, considering the 10-year anniversary of "The Catch" is next month.

"It's cool to be a part of something that so many Husker fans remember so fondly," Davison said. "I have people tell me that they remember where they were when I caught that ball and when JFK died.

"It's crazy to think about it like that, but people around here are such passionate fans that when something like that happens, it does seem to kind of fixate in their memories."

The catch has earned Davison household-name status throughout Husker Nation. It has made him so popular that some former teammates, including quarterback Scott Frost, sometimes like to razz Davison, kidding him that he was merely a one-catch wonder still living off the glory of one play.

"He's made a career off that, no doubt," joked Frost, who threw the 12-yard pass with no time left in regulation that helped force overtime. "That one play has taken him a long way, but you know, Matt was a good player, too. He played receiver in an offense that didn't throw it much and made a lot of good plays."

Nov. 8, 1997, was the date that changed Davison's life. The No. 1-ranked Cornhuskers took an 8-0 record into their contest against a 6-3 Missouri team at Faurot Field in Columbia, Mo.

While many figured the game would turn into another romp for Nebraska, it wound up being a 45-38 overtime thriller. The combination of NU's ability to come through in the

clutch and Davison's heroics turned out to be a key cog in coach Tom Osborne's team winning a share of the national title in his final season as head coach.

"It was just one playing during the course of a long season, but I think the reason it's remembered so much is because of where we finished up," said Davison, a Tecumseh native. "I don't know when it actually set in that I realized that, 'holy smokes, this is a big deal,' but being a Nebraska kid, I knew how things are and when things happen like that.

"I knew people weren't going to forget quickly."

While Davison's game-tying reception has referred to as "miraculous" on several occasions, the fact that Nebraska was even in scoring position was remarkable. Trailing 38-31 with 1:02 to play, NU had to march 67 yards for the tying score.

Facing a third-and-10 with seven seconds to go, the Huskers finally opted to run a play called "99 double slant" with Davison as the primary target. However, Davison was covered, and Frost, knowing time was running short, quickly forced the ball to his second option, wingback Shevin Wiggins, who was tightly covered by Missouri safety Julian Jones.

All Davison could see was a lot of congestion over the middle. Then, suddenly, he saw the football somehow deflect in his direction.

"I didn't know it had hit Shevin's foot or who it had hit or if it had hit the ground or what," Davison said. "I remember the ball popping up in the air, and it was just floating end over end like a punt. Then, I just remember laying out as fast as I could to try to the ball."

After coming up with the diving grab, there seemed to be a brief moment where Davison was the only one who knew what had happened. Frost said he was watching the seconds roll off the clock, didn't see the catch and didn't realize until the official signaled a touchdown what had happened."

Nebraska went on to win the game in overtime on a 12-yard TD run by Frost. However, the victory wasn't sealed until Husker defensive ends Grant Wistrom and Mike Rucker teamed up to sack Missouri quarterback Corby Jones on fourth down — yet another great play in the memorable win.

"I think that people forget sometimes that it was a great football game, the entire game," Davison said. "Some people remember that one play, and it kind of defines the game, but if you go back and watch the whole game, it was a great game from start to finish."

After the frenzied celebration on the field and in the locker room following the win, Davison said he, Frost and Wiggins all sat together on the ride home almost in shock.

"We were just sitting there saying, 'Oh my God, can you believe what just happened?'" Davison said.

Now he knows. ■



Matt Davison had 93 career catches for 1,456 yards.

Terry Douglass is the sports editor of the Grand Island (Neb.) Independent. He can be reached at terry.douglass@msn.com.

The Talk Of The Town

High-powered Missouri offense will be ready to test Huskers in North Division showdown



Curt McKEEVER

HIS TEAM'S EFFORT had left him feeling proud. And yet, at the end of the night, Missouri had 31 first downs, 581 yards and a never-in-doubt 38-17 victory.

"Playing a team like this defensively is like running a marathon," Illinois State coach Denver Johnson said. "You're just absolutely wasted after it's over. We may have to take a day off (next) week in order to get our guys back physically."

What Johnson described is exactly the kind of scene that people who made the Tigers their preseason choice to win the Big 12 North Division envisioned.

It's also why they'll breeze into their Oct. 6 home game against Nebraska with a 4-0 record. And very much anticipating the showdown that many figure will leave the winner in the driver's seat to win the North Division.

While some players claimed they didn't hear the public address announcer's updates on the Nebraska-Ball State game as the Tigers were taking care of Illinois State, linebacker Sean Weatherspoon indicated that wasn't all true.

"Guys on the sideline," Weatherspoon told the Kansas City Star, "they were bumping each other."

Indeed, after the game, Missouri quarterback Chase Daniel said of the Huskers: "They're all that's on my mind now."

It's primarily because of Daniel that Missouri will go into its game against NU as the favorite.

With Daniel averaging 356.8 yards per game, the Tigers ranked fifth nationally on offense with an average of 544.3.

Yes, coach Gary Pinkel has complete faith in his 5-foot-11, 225-pound junior quarterback.

"He's an amazing young man," Pinkel says. "I've been fortunate to be around a lot of quarterbacks, several of which have played in the NFL, and I've never been around a guy like this guy. He's probably the best natural leader I've been around. His work ethic and quiet confidence have been very, very impressive."

One thing you should already know about Daniel — he's a fierce competitor. Remember how the Tigers got down last year in Lincoln, but still kept coming at the Huskers? That didn't happen the last time they were in Memorial Stadium, when they lost 24-3 in 2004.

But according to senior tight end Martin Rucker, the Tigers' attitude also stems from Pinkel's willingness to give them more ownership.

"He's become a lot more of a players' coach," Rucker said. "He's been a lot more visible to us. He's taken a lot of our ideas into account. He preaches that it's the player's team, and he really lives by that. He lets us have a say in everything we do."

"And he's become a lot more relaxed. Before, it was just kind of a dictatorship. Now he's given us a lot of choice in things. He lets us play the game. We have a lot more freedom. It's made it much more of a joy to play for him."

"When the guys play comfortably, that's when they play their best."

Oh, Mizzou still is far from polished, especially on defense. The Tigers ranked 89th nationally after their fourth game, allowing an average of 434.5 yards. They also had issues in the punting game, as their net average of 26.4 yards ranked 117th out of 119 teams.

A counter to that, though, is Jeremy Maclin, the nation's all-purpose yardage leader (230.3 per game). Against Illinois State, he had 163 yards in returns, going the distance on a punt for the second time of the season. He also caught five passes for 53 yards and a score and had one rush for 22 yards.

"You take away carrying the football on offense, and catching, and I just think you can witness the impact of having a player like that in the kicking game and what he can do," Pinkel said of the redshirt freshman. "He's a major, major factor in our kicking game and can help us in so many ways. He did it again and we'll probably see it more as time goes on."

Illinois State's Johnson is just glad he won't.

With his team preparing to defend Missouri's five-wide, empty-backfield formation on the opening play, the Cardinals had to burn a timeout because they were a player short. Missouri had planned to run an inside screen to Will Franklin, and stuck with the call after the timeout.

Fifty-seven yards and 17 seconds later, Franklin had scored to send the Tigers on their way to a second straight 4-0 start — last accomplished at Missouri in 1905-06.

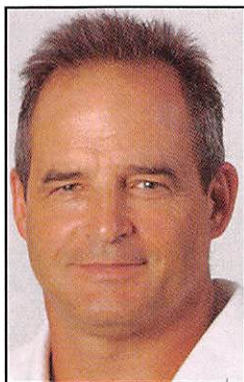
A few hours later, the talk of the town was the Oct. 6 meeting with the Huskers.

"We'll be ready," Daniel said. "It's definitely been on everyone's minds, but we did a great job staying focused on the task at hand. That's why we're 4-0. We haven't even come close at all to putting our complete game together."

Nevertheless, through three games, the average time of Missouri's 19 scoring drives was a lightning-quick 2 minutes and one second. Then, against Illinois State, they had three scoring possessions of at least 10 plays that took 3:33 or less.

No wonder Pinkel was among those ready to see what comes on Oct. 6.

"We're excited about playing a great football team," he said. "This place will be rocking. It'll be fun." ■



Gary Pinkel is in his seventh year as head coach at Missouri.

Curt McKeever is a sportswriter for the Lincoln Journal Star. In addition to reporting on football, he is the primary beat writer for baseball. Curt can be reached at cmckeever@journalstar.com

2007 Huskers



NDAMUKONG SUH
Nose Tackle

He Was Always Big, Even When He Was Little

By MIKE BABCOCK ● PHOTOS: SCOTT BRUHN

Parents often complained to the referee. "Check his birth certificate."

Ndamukong Suh came to expect the questions about his age. He was always big, even when he was little, he said, sounding a bit like baseball Hall of Famer, and noted semanticist, Yogi Berra.

Nebraska's 6-foot-4, 305-pound sophomore defensive tackle was always bigger than other kids his age, and to about the same degree. He was imposing on a soccer field, playing forward or sweeper on defense. Sometimes he'd play goal-keeper. At least then he wouldn't knock them down.

He never really meant to hurt anyone. He wasn't a ruffian. He just wanted to play soccer.

But when he would build momentum on the attack, they would be in his path to the goal. They would get in his way, and he couldn't stop or avoid them. So down they'd go. He'd look back to see if they were all right and even offer to help them up. Sometimes he was called for fouls.

His dad told him that would happen, but he shouldn't worry.

Eventually, he asked his parents if he could try a different sport. They told him he could. That's how his soccer career ended. "It was basically my decision," he said. "I kind of grew out of it."

He started playing soccer when he was 3-years-old. And he was good at it.

"I had to be with the genes I've got," Suh said. "My dad, he loves it. If you go to our house, I'll almost guarantee some TV in the house has soccer on."

His dad, Michael, is from Cameroon and played professionally in Germany before settling in the United States. He still plays in adult leagues in Portland.

Suh's sister Ngum went to Mississippi State on a soccer scholarship. Her participation in Oregon's Olympic Development Program helped her earn the scholarship.

He would have been in the program, too, but he quit soccer before the eighth grade. That's when he played football for the first time, in a youth league associated with his middle school. Being bigger than the other kids on a football field didn't draw the complaints that his playing soccer had. Running over smaller opponents was the idea. "I had a good knack at it," he said. "I kind of liked it."

His football career was put on hold a year later, however. His mom wouldn't let him play football as a high school freshman. Bernadette wanted her son to adjust to his new surroundings. And because freshman football practice began before the first day of classes, she regarded it as a distraction.

He begged but to no avail. The coaches told him he could report late; he could miss preseason practices and come out before the games began, they said. Again he begged. Again his mom said no. In retrospect, "it was definitely good for me," he said. "My time came."

Like his dad, his mom didn't know much about football. She is from Jamaica, where her athletic interests were track and cricket, which "is not too interesting to me," Ndamukong said.

He's been to Jamaica, when he was 8-years-old, but not to Cameroon, although now that his sister has graduated from Mississippi State, the family plans to go in the not-too-distant future.

In Cameroon's Ngema tribe, Ndamukong means "House of Spears."

His dad and mom met in Portland through mutual friends, his dad's host family while attending Portland State. His mom had moved to Portland after graduating from Southern Oregon.

Though she wouldn't allow him to play football as a high school freshman, she did let him play basketball and go out for the track and field team, after the coach begged him because of his size and strength. He tried putting the shot, but only for a short time. He didn't enjoy it and quit the team.

In his junior year, the coach persuaded him to give the

FEATURING
NDAMUKONG
SUH

shot put another try. This time, he stayed with it, winning the district as a junior and the state 4A title as a senior, with a 61-4 effort.

He played basketball all the way through high school. "I love basketball," he said, adding that if he were taller, he might have considered playing basketball at the collegiate level.

When he finally got to play football in the 10th grade, however, that became his passion and, as he would learn later, a means for earning a scholarship to pay for a college education.

Early in his sophomore season, Suh became a starter at offensive guard. He was immediately successful because of his athleticism and size. The system wasn't complicated. The team didn't pass much. "We ran a lot," he said. "Basically, if someone was lined up in front of you, that was the person you were supposed to block, unless you were pulling. It wasn't too hard of a scheme."

As a junior, he played defense, too. And it was at defensive tackle that he earned the Rivals.com ranking as the No. 1 high school prospect in Oregon as a senior. He also was the state's Class 4A Defensive Player of the Year, the Portland Tribune's Athlete of the Year and a Parade All-American.

He was among seven Cornhusker recruits in 2005 to play in the U.S. Army All-America Game in San Antonio, starting in the offensive line for the West team because of injury problems.

Oregon was the first school to send him a recruiting letter, in the spring of his junior year. But he marked Oregon off his list because it didn't have a suitable engineering program. His dad is a chemical engineer, and he wanted to follow in his dad's footsteps, in some kind of engineering. "I always followed my dad as a little kid, going to work with him on weekends when I had the chance," he said.

In fact, he might have gone to Portland's Benson Polytechnic instead of Grant High because of the engineering programs there. His major at Nebraska is construction management.

His second choice in recruiting was California-Berkeley. That was his dad's first choice because of its engineering school. "He said, 'I kind of want you to go to Cal, but if you don't



Ndamukong Suh had eight tackles for loss and 3.5 sacks last year as a redshirt freshman.

feel that's the right place for you, by all means, choose somewhere else," said Suh. "That's one thing I do appreciate. My parents did leave that up to me. They let me make my choice, as long as it wasn't real off-the-wall."

He ruled out Oregon State because it was too close to home. He ruled out Miami because he didn't see the commitment to academics that California and Nebraska had. And he ruled out Mississippi State, where his sister had gone, because the football program

lacked Nebraska's tradition.

That tradition, and the prospect of restoring it, was a significant factor in his decision, as was the academic support system and the presence of John Blake, then the defensive line coach.

Suh knew about Blake before Blake began recruiting him. Blake had been at Mississippi State when Suh's sister was there, and she got to know him while dating one of his players.

"He treated her kind of like a

"Suh has unlimited potential. Keep him healthy, and he'll be in 'The League' somewhere."

— Teammate Barry Turner (on Ndamukong Suh)

daughter when she was down there on her own," Suh said. "I didn't see why I couldn't come here and he'd take care of me the same way."

Suh was among the most prominent members of coach Bill Callahan's second recruiting class. He was an imposing presence, much the same as he had been on the youth soccer fields in Portland. "He can do things I've never seen anybody in my life do," freshman roommate Barry Turner said.

He expected to play without redshirting. And he did, for two games.

Suh saw action against Maine and Wake Forest. But during a developmental practice on the Monday after the Wake Forest game, he went down with a knee injury, doing a stunt, "tore it up." Actually, the injury had occurred in high school, playing basketball. He had gone up for a dunk and came down wrong. The knee swelled, but when the swelling went down, he didn't think more about it.

He underwent surgery and could have returned late in the season. But the coaches encouraged him to petition for a medical redshirt to preserve eligibility. Even so, he traveled with the team. The experience of going on the road was valuable but it also was frustrating, watching his teammates play.

"I remember a lot of times calling home, saying, 'I feel like I want to come back home,' " he said. "Things didn't go the way I planned. But my parents said, 'Be strong, fight through it and then at the end of the year or in the spring, if things aren't working out, (if) you're still feeling the same way, you can make a change.' Obviously, things turned around in the right direction."

He was rooming with Zach Potter, another of a school-record 13 true freshmen who played in 2005, by then and the two kept each other pos-

itive. Potter was a third-string defensive end, playing primarily on the field-goal-block team. "I'm glad he was my roommate," said Suh. "It was fun."

In retrospect, having to deal with the knee injury "only made me a better person," he said.

Suh played in every game last season, backing up Ola Dagunduro at nose tackle, and finished among the team leaders in tackles for loss, with eight, and sacks, with 3.5. Now he has a Blackshirt.

"He's got all the talent in the world," Potter said before the Nevada game. "Suh is going to make a difference on and off the field with all of us,

really make us step up when we need to and be there when we might be down, get some encouragement. He's definitely going to be a difference-maker."

Turner echoes that. "Suh is probably one of the strongest men in the world," said Turner. "Suh has unlimited potential. Keep him healthy, and he'll be in 'The League' somewhere."

Suh would like that. But he's just getting started at Nebraska. During the off-season, one of his "main goals" was to "cut my body fat down and gain a lot more muscle," he said.

His optimum playing weight is 300 to 305 pounds. The spring before last, he weighed 325 to 330, and "that was not healthy at all," he said. "It was very uncomfortable."

"I never want to go back to that weight again."

His size doesn't lead to a check of his birth certificate anymore. However, if it were to be checked, it would show just how young he is. He won't turn 21 until January.

And when he knocks down opponents . . . well, that's what he's supposed to do. ■

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10 QUESTIONS

with
SEAN HILL

**Senior H-back
Lisle, Ill.**

Fortunately, Sean Hill was an “idiot” about his being diabetic. Because of it, while he was in high school, he figured he wouldn’t continue playing football in college. So it really didn’t matter that the mailbox wasn’t stuffed with recruiting letters from Division I programs addressed to him.

When Naperville North High teammate Corey McKeon picked Nebraska, however, Hill found himself rethinking his college plans, which likely would have taken him to Eastern Illinois, where he would have been a regular student. An older brother, Kevin, had gone there and played football. And the ratio of female-to-male students was three-to-one, Sean said. “So that was a big selling point.”

But in addition to giving McKeon a scholarship, the Cornhuskers asked Hill if he would be interested in walking on. He was. And he learned that the diabetes wouldn’t prevent him from doing so.

It can affect him, of course. He might tire toward the end of practice, for example.

“Sometimes it’s a hassle,” he said. “But as long as you’re responsible, you know what you’re doing, you eat right and you take care of it before practice, it’s not really a problem.”

Not only did McKeon’s getting a scholarship from Nebraska open a door for Hill, the door it opened was to the school for which he had affection since an early age. His uncle, Dan Hill, played tight end at Nebraska in the early 1980s. Dan was from Falls City, Neb., as were Sean’s parents.

He regularly visited Falls City growing up, and “I’ve always been a Nebraska fan,” he said.

If someone were to visit you in suburban Chicago, where would you take them?

“I’d take them into the city. I’d probably take them to a Cubs game because that’s an experience even if you’re not a big baseball fan. Wrigley Field is an old-fashioned ballpark. They still have the manual scoreboard, the ivy on the walls. It’s a great atmosphere. If you’re just a fan of athletics, it’s a great experience. The life around Wrigley Field is pretty spectacular. That’s where I’d love to live. And I’d probably take them to Navy Pier. Anywhere downtown is fun.”

Jeremy Shockey or Tony Gonzalez?

“I like Jeremy Shockey. I think his attitude when he plays is just incredible. You can tell he loves the game and wouldn’t want to do anything else.”

What food would you absolutely not eat?

“I like a lot of stuff. But I can’t handle spicy food. I have the lowest tolerance to spice, ever. So spicy Doritos, those Flaming Hot Cheetos, I can’t eat that stuff. My mouth’s on fire. It’s very unpleasant.”

If you were involved in a sport at the collegiate level other than football, what would it be?

“I played basketball in high school. I loved it. I’m just not big



enough for college basketball. I couldn’t shoot real well. I played good defense and rebounded, whatever got me on the court.”

If your life were made into a movie, who would you pick to play your character?

“I love Edward Norton, although he looks nothing like me. He’s skinny. Or Matthew McConaughey, just because he’s a good actor and I love his accent; I wish I had it. But I don’t. He’s a Texas fan, so that’s messed up. Either of those two guys. They’re good actors and the women love them.”

Who’s the funniest guy on the team?

“Josh Mueller makes me laugh all the time. He’s hilarious. Corey McKeon’s pretty funny. There are a lot of funny guys. But I laugh at Josh no matter what. He has these one-word comments, these little quips, and they’re just hilarious. Bo Ruud has a real dry sense of humor.”

When you cook for yourself, what’s your specialty?

“I love making brats, soak ‘em in beer and cook ‘em. And then grill potatoes. That’s my favorite thing to do in the summer. I make pretty good French toast, although I’m not a breakfast guy so that doesn’t get made very often. I’m pretty much a meat-and-potatoes guy.”

Eva Longoria or Jessica Simpson?

“I’d have to say Eva Longoria just because Jessica Simpson’s not very smart. She’s definitely pretty, but I’d have to say Eva Longoria. I think she likes sports, too, because of Tony Parker. She’s got that Latin lovin’ thing going on.”

Can you describe what it’s like taking the Tunnel Walk?

“You’ll be sitting in the locker room, kind of excited, and then that music comes on and people just start going nuts. You can’t help but get goose bumps. You start walking through the tunnel and you can hear the fans. The stadium’s vibrating. Then you come out and it’s just full of red. It’s an incredible feeling, just to know that 85,000 are here to watch you 110 kids play, just love everything you do.”

What three things do you absolutely have to have on your iPod?

“I’d definitely have to have John Mayer. He’s awesome. Got to have the newest hip-hop, rap songs on there. Whatever’s popular. And then it’s pretty cliché, but Dave Matthews. I’ve listened to him since I was a little kid. His music never gets old.” ■

NICKNAMES

(Maybe we're just not aware of them, but we don't hear as much about football players' nicknames as we once did. They might be kept more within the team nowadays. The most famous are probably Johnny "the Jet" Rodgers and Tom "Trainwreck" Novak. And Maurice Purify is among the players on this season's team with a nickname. He goes by "Mo." Here are a few other nicknames from the past.)

RUNNING BACKS

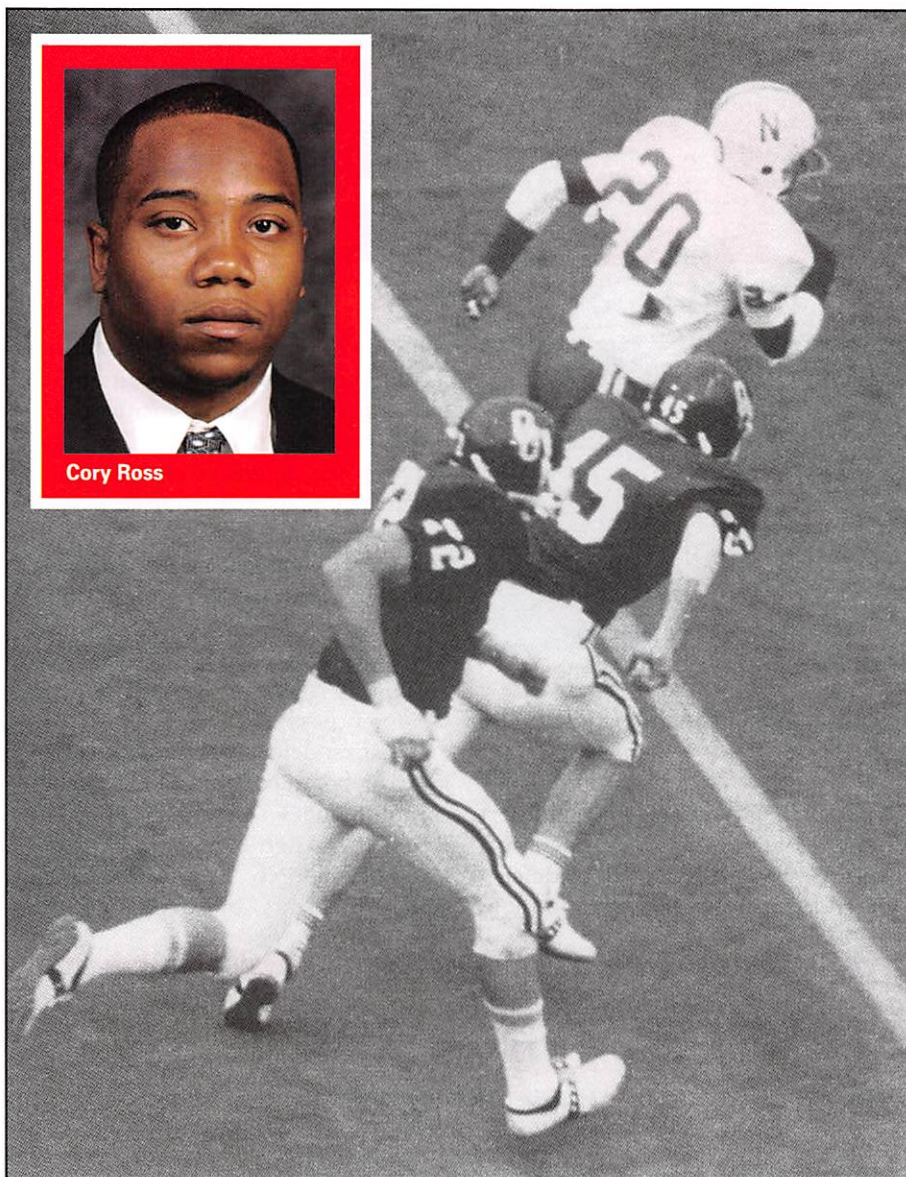
Johnny Bender, "the Sutton Comet" (1900-04)
 Lloyd Cardwell, "Wild Hoss" (1934-36)
 Guy Chamberlin, "Champ" (1914-15)
 Roger Craig, "the Dodger" (1980-82)
 Tony Davis, "Tough Tony" (1973-75)
 Ben Gregory, "Pope" (1965-67)
 Keith Jones, "End Zone" (1984-87)
 Willie Paschall, "Frenchy" (1962-64)
 Jarvis Redwine, "Marvelous" (1979-80)
 Bobby Reynolds, "Mr. Touchdown" (1950-52)
 Cory Ross, "Pork Chop" (2002-05)
 Willie Ross, "the Twister" (1961-63)
 Mike Rozier, "Michael Heisman" (1981-83)
 Dan Schneiss, "Bull" (1968-70)
 Bill Thornton, "Thunder" (1960-62)
 Harry Wilson, "Lighthouse" (1964-66)
 Charlie Winters, "Choo-Choo" (1965-66)
 Calvin Jones & Derek Brown, "We-Backs" (1991-92)

OTHERS

John Adkins, "Spider" (1970-71)
 George Andrews, "the Smiling Assassin" (1976-78)
 Walt Barnes, "Crazy Horse" (1963-65)
 Bob Brown, "Boomer" (1961-63)
 Langston Coleman, "Trey" (1964-66)
 John Dervin, "Happy Tooth" (1962-64)
 Bruce Dunning, "Stunning" (1977-78)
 John Dutton, "Lurch" (1971-73)
 Earl Eager, "Dog" (1903-05)
 LeRoy Etienne, "Eight, Nine, Ten" (1985-88)
 Irving Fryar, "the Flyer" (1981-83)
 Dave Humm, "the Dealer" (1972-74)
 Larry Jacobson, "Jake" (1969-71)
 William Lyman, "Link" (1918-21)
 Wayne Meylan, "Mongrel" (1965-67)
 Jerry Murtaugh, "Rat" (1968-70)
 Bob Newton, "Big Fig," "Fig" (1969-70)
 Dave Noble, "Moose" (1921-23)
 Tom Penney, "Nickel" (1966-68)
 Ed Periard, "Fast Eddie" (1968-70)
 Lynn Senkbeil, "Butch" (1964-66)
 Anthony Steels, "Slick" (1979-81)
 Broderick Thomas, "Sandman" (1985-88)
 Matt Turman, "the Turmanator" (1994-96)
 Lloyd Voss, "Hoss" (1961-63)
 Jamie Williams, "Iceman" (1979-82)
 Mike Rozier, Turner Gill & Irving Fryar, "the Triplets" (1981-83)



Cory Ross



(Johnny Rodgers' career-receiving records, once seemingly unbreakable, are likely to fall in the not-too-distant future, under an assault facilitated by coach Bill Callahan's West Coast offense. This season, Huskers Illustrated takes a look at the all-time best receivers, as senior Terrence Nunn continues to climb on the all-time receptions list, topped by Rodgers.)

CORY ROSS (2002-2005) No. 4 5-6, 195 Denver, Colo.

Going into this season, Ross (aka "Pork Chop") was seventh in career receptions, with 71. By the end of the non-conference schedule, he was ninth, an indication of how quickly the list is changing with Bill Callahan's West Coast offense in place. For that matter, Jeff Kinney had dropped to fifth, with Marlon Lucky moving up to fourth, only three catches behind Matt Davison in third. And Nate Swift had moved into sixth place, only three catches behind Kinney. In any case, the versatile Ross — he was a high school All-American defensive back — was a good fit for the offense, having played some wide receiver in high school. He led the team in rushing Callahan's first two seasons, going over 1,000 yards as a junior (1,102), and he tied Nunn for second in receptions as a senior with 43, a school single-season record for running backs. Lucky was on pace to break that record this season. Ross caught only seven passes, total, in his first two seasons at Nebraska, underscoring the dramatic change in offensive philosophy. He was a co-captain as a senior. He signed with the Baltimore Ravens as a free agent and began this season on their practice squad after returning kicks for them in 2006. ■

On the End

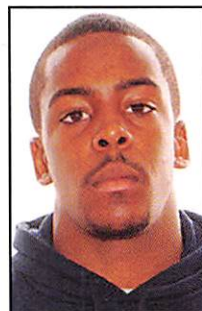
Others may join trio of defensive end prospects

By Rick Shaw

The Nebraska defensive line has struggled, at times, in the early 2007 season. The Husker line had difficulty generating an effective pass rush against noncon-



Eric Harper



Josh Williams

ference opponents, tallying just three sacks in the first four games.

Nebraska coaches worked diligently during the spring and summer months to garner the commitments of a trio of talented high school defensive end prospects. In addition, they

continue to remain in hot pursuit for a couple of other potential difference makers at the end position. By restocking the talent and building depth at the defensive end slots, the coaches hope to ensure the success of future Nebraska defenses.

Currently ranked as the 11th best collection of defensive end commitments in the country by Rivals.com, Nebraska's trio of end prospects were all highly recruited by other BCS Conference schools.

The first defensive end prospect to jump on board Nebraska's 2008 list of commitments was Eric Harper out of John Ehret High School in Marrero, La. Rated the No. 23 prospect in the state (three stars) by Rivals.com, the

NEBRASKA COMMITMENTS FOR 2008

Player	Pos.	Ht.	Wt.	40	Hometown (School)
Will Compton	LB	6-2	214	4.5	Bonne Terre, Mo. (North County)
Sean Fisher	LB	6-5	210	4.6	Omaha, Neb. (Millard North)
Blaine Gabbert	QB	6-4	226	4.65	Ballwin, Mo. (Parkway West)
Bryce Givens	OL	6-6	257	5.1	Denver, Colo. (J.K. Mullen)
Jonas Gray	RB	5-10	213	4.44	Detroit, Mich. (Country Day)
Eric Harper	DE	6-4	220	4.62	Marrero La. (John Ehret)
Ricky Henry	OL	6-4	300	5.2	Omaha, Neb. (Burke/North Dakota State College of Science)
Tyson Hetzer	TE	6-7	265	4.75	Glendora, Calif. (Citrus CC)
Adrian Hilburn	WR	6-2	190	4.4	San Francisco, Calif. (City College of SF)
Dan Hoch	OL	6-6	295	5.21	Harlan, Iowa
Keelan Johnson	DB	6-0	195	4.5	Mesa, Ariz.
John Levorson	ATH	6-4	185	4.55	Crete, Neb.
Cameron Meredith	DE	6-4	222	4.6	Santa Ana, Calif. (Mater Dei)
Shaun Mohler	LB	6-3	225	4.6	Costa Mesa, Calif. (Orange Coast CC)
Collins Okafor	RB	6-1	210	4.54	Omaha, Neb. (Westside)
Darius Parish	DT	6-3	325	5.08	Wichita, Kan.
Kyler Reed	ATH	6-3	204	4.5	Overland Park, Kan. (St. Thomas Aquinas)
Doug Rippy	LB	6-2	218	4.6	Columbus, Ohio (McKinley)
Baker Steinkuhler	OL	6-6	290	4.88	Lincoln, Neb. (Southwest)
David Whitmore	DB	6-2	190	4.5	Port Arthur, Texas (Memorial)
Josh Williams	DE	6-4	220	4.8	Denton, Texas (Ryan)
D.J. Woods	WR	6-0	169	4.35	Strongsville, Ohio

For more daily recruiting information, visit HuskersIllustrated.com, a member of the Rivals.com network.

6-foot-4, 220-pound athlete is on track to graduate from high school in December and join the Husker squad for the spring semester.

Harper chose Nebraska over scholarship offers from Texas A&M, Mississippi State, Tulane and others. In addition, he received strong recruiting interest from a host of other schools, including LSU, Auburn and Ohio State.

According to Ehret head coach Billy North, the Huskers are getting a great one in Harper.

"I've been coaching here for over 20 years, and I don't put out a lot of bull to people, so when I say Harper's a great player — he really is," North said. "Last year, he played seven positions for us — defensive end, strong safety, inside linebacker, defensive tackle, tight end, wide receiver, full-back and even spent about five minutes at quarterback, too. He made all-metro last year as a defensive end and was co-MVP on our team.

"He's a legit 6-foot-4 1/2 but only weighs 220 pounds, so he's a little skinny," North said. "A lot of the majors wanted him as an inside linebacker, and he has the frame to get up to 250-260 easily. He runs a legit 4.62-40 (yard dash), so he's fast for his size. I'll tell you what, Eric's just a ballplayer is what he is. He's fast, physical, hates to lose and just loves the game."

Harper will likely begin his playing days in Lincoln at the weakside defensive end slot, though he could also factor in the mix as a SAM linebacker.

Another athletic end to give an early nod to Nebraska is Josh Williams of Ryan High School in Denton, Texas. Rated the No. 63 prospect in Texas (three stars) and the No. 14 weakside defensive end prospect in the country by Rivals.com, Williams specializes in creating chaos for opposing teams' quarterbacks.

Williams earned first-team all-district honors as a junior after recording 68 tackles, six sacks, 22 tackles-for-loss and six pass deflections. In his first game of the 2007 season, the speedy lineman racked up four sacks.

The standout from Texas took an official visit to Lincoln in mid-September to watch the Huskers take on USC. Though Nebraska fell short on the scoreboard that weekend, the

RECRUITING NOTES

Widening the Borders

By Sean Stevens

A big part of Nebraska's recruiting philosophy includes closing off a 500-square mile radius around Lincoln. That plan is coming to fruition for the 2008 recruiting class in a big way. Of the 22 prospects who have orally committed to the Huskers, 11 are from cities and towns within that area.

The most recent commitment is Kyler Reed (6-foot-3, 204 pounds, 4.5-second 40-yard dash) of Overland Park, Kan. Reed visited Lincoln unofficially for the USC game, and delivered his pledge to the NU coaching staff on the Tuesday after the game.

"I've been to games at Kansas State and Kansas, but Nebraska's facilities and fans are second to none," Reed said. "I'm not too worried about the facilities. To me, that is kind of an extra, but I really do like the fans at Nebraska and the environment there."

Reed's decision was less than surprising given his affinity for the Big Red.

"They have always been . . . the team I have been rooting for and since I was five or whatever," said Reed. "I kind of knew I was going to go there, but I wanted to get there and talk to the coaches and see if I truly liked it."

Reed is likely to start as a linebacker in Lincoln but could also move to wide receiver or tight end depending on how the rest of the class fills out.

As mentioned, Reed becomes the eleventh player from what Nebraska recruiting defines as their "local" area and the second from Kansas, joining defensive tackle Darius Parish (6-3, 325, 5.08) of Wichita.

The home state has produced four pledges, including offensive lineman Baker Steinkuhler (6-6, 290, 4.9) of Lincoln Southwest, linebacker Sean Fisher (6-5, 210, 4.6) of Millard North, running back Collins Okafor (6-1, 210, 4.54) of Omaha Westside and athlete John Levorson (6-4, 185, 4.55) of Crete. Center Ricky Henry (6-4, 300, 5.2) of North Dakota College of Science also spent his high school years at Omaha Burke.

Nebraska holds commitments from Rivals.com's top two players from Missouri — quarterback Blaine Gabbert (6-4, 226, 4.65) and linebacker Will Compton (6-2, 214, 4.5).

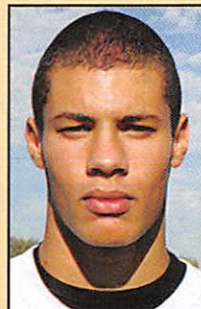
Colorado and Iowa have each given the Huskers one highly ranked offensive lineman for 2008 — Bryce Givens (6-6, 257, 5.1) of Denver and Dan Hoch (6-6, 302, 5.21) of Harlan, Iowa.

The list includes Rivals.com's top-ranked players in Nebraska (Steinkuhler), Missouri (Gabbert) and Iowa (Hoch).

The local count may soon rise to 12, as defensive end Riley Reiff (6-6, 235, 4.8) of Parkston, S.D., has rescinded his commitment to Iowa and now is considering the Huskers and Hawkeyes as even for his pledge.

Reiff is the top-ranked player in South Dakota and had told the Hawkeyes he was coming to Iowa City shortly after attending Nebraska's spring game. He's rethinking his decision now.

Rarely does a player decommit from a school and later rejoin the fold, so Nebraska's chances are very good for Reiff's pledge. ■



Kyler Reed

trip helped solidify Williams' pledge to the Husker coaching staff.

"The best part of it was getting up there and meeting all the guys and all of the other guys that were committed," Williams said. "It's a pretty tight group. Just a lot of guys coming from different areas."

"I was a little disappointed that it was a loss, but they never gave up. They kept fighting. I see some weakness in (the defensive line), and I think that there is work to be done and it can get better."

Williams chose Nebraska over scholarship offers from Oklahoma State, Texas Tech, Arizona, Arkansas, Missouri and others.

Cameron Meredith was the last defensive end prospect to join the Husker fold, delivering his commitment in late August. The 6-4, 222-pound standout from Santa Ana, Calif. (Mater Dei), chose Nebraska over scholarship offers from Oklahoma, Washington, Oregon, Arizona State, Colorado and others.

"There were a bunch of things that made me choose Nebraska," Meredith said. "Probably the main

reason was the people. That was a real big separator. Everyone from the gas station guy to the head coach — they were all good, down-to-earth people.

"It was like I belonged there. I just felt it when I was there. It seemed like a nice place to go for the next four to five years."

Rated the No. 61 prospect in the state (three stars) and the No. 16 weakside defensive end prospect in the country, Meredith earned first-team all-league honors as a junior after compiling 60 tackles and eight sacks.

All three of the current Husker defensive end commits are slated to play on the weak side of the line. Nebraska still hopes to land one or two recruits at the strong or base side of the defensive line and a couple of prospects remain atop their wish list.



Cameron Meredith

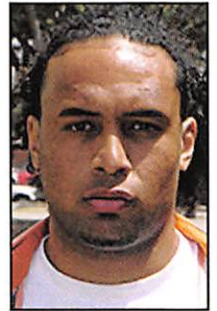
Simi Kuli, a 6-4, 270-pound athlete out of El Camino Community College in Torrance, Calif., may be one of the top college football prospects in the country. Rated as the No. 1 junior college prospect (five stars) at any position by Rivals.com, Kuli plans to visit Lincoln during the weekend of Oct. 19-20 to watch the Huskers play Texas A&M.

"Nebraska is like 'D-End' University," Kuli said. "All of their defensive ends are first round picks, like No. 90 (Adam Carriker). The Nebraska coaches told me that they liked my athletic ability and that if I come to Nebraska and work hard, I'll be able to start immediately."

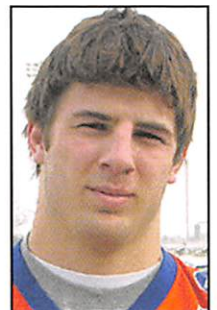
Kuli ended his freshman season at El Camino with 56 tackles, 15 tackles for loss and five sacks. In addition to Nebraska, he also holds scholarship offers from Oklahoma, LSU, Tennessee, Oregon, Texas A&M and several others.

Riley Reiff, a 6-6, 235-pound end from Parkston, S.D., also excels on the wrestling mat. Rated the No. 1 player in the state and the No. 28 strongside defensive end prospect in the country by Rivals, Reiff was on hand to watch Nebraska take on USC in mid-September. Once a solid commitment to Iowa, Reiff said he's since reopened his recruitment and will now choose between the Huskers and Hawkeyes.

Getting pressure on the quarterback is essential to fielding a good defense, at any level. The Nebraska coaching staff is doing everything within its power to ensure that the Husker defense is equipped to do that over the next four or five years. ■



Simi Kuli



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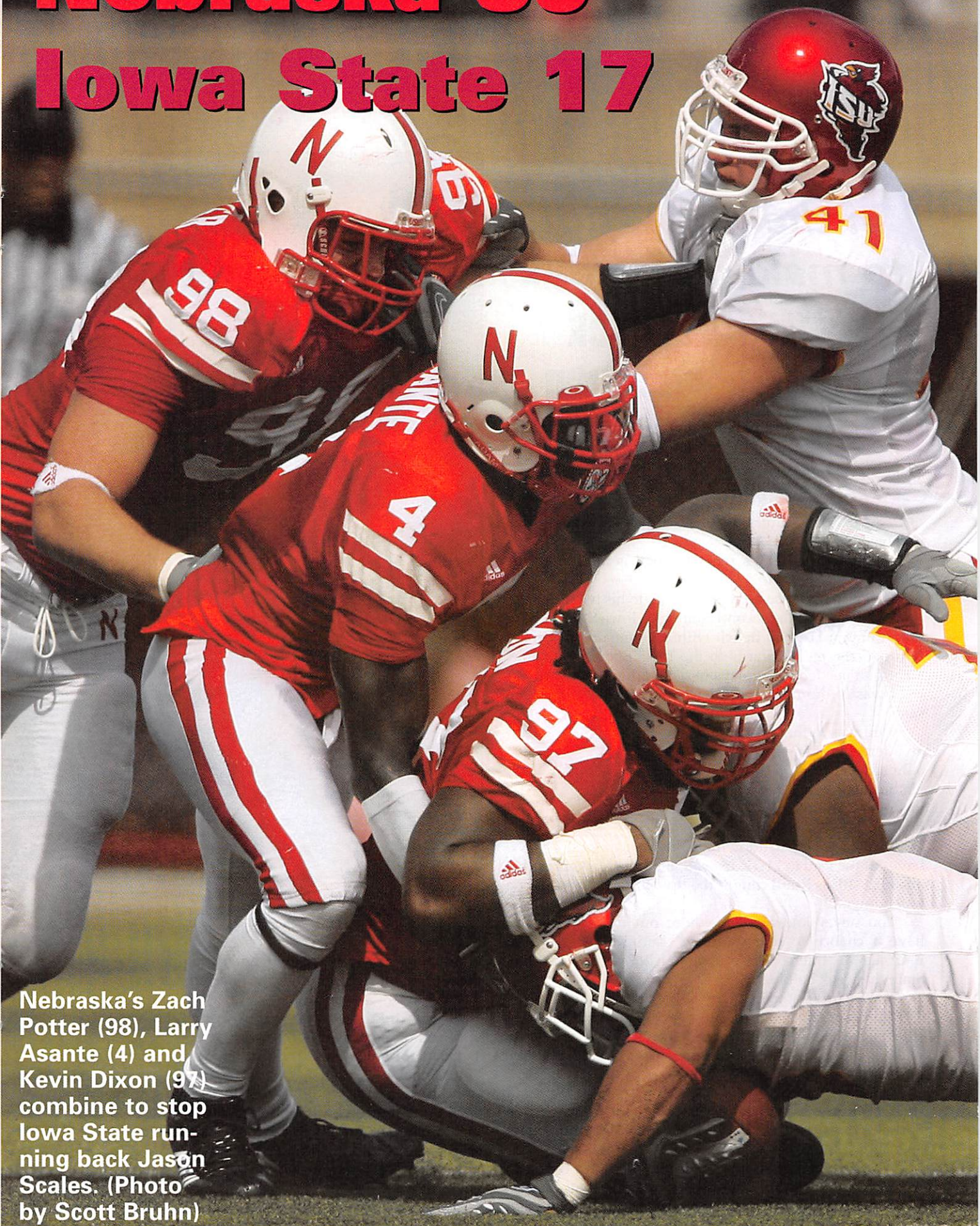
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Nebraska 35

Iowa State 17



Nebraska's Zach Potter (98), Larry Asante (4) and Kevin Dixon (97) combine to stop Iowa State running back Jason Scales. (Photo by Scott Bruhn)

'What Football Is A

***Grixby, Ruud
in the right spot
to make key plays***

**By Mike Babcock
Photos: Scott Bruhn**

The turning point might have been a kickoff return midway through the second quarter. Or it might have been Bo Ruud's interception return for a touchdown late in the third quarter.

Either way, Cortney Grixby was involved.

Making plays, "that's what football is all about," he said.

Oh yes, in that case he was referring to his two interceptions in the game, the second coming as Iowa State tried to rally from an 11-point deficit with 3:50 remaining. Grixby returned the ball 41 yards to the Iowa State 3-yard line. Nebraska needed three plays to score a final touchdown.

"I was in the right spot to get some interceptions," he said.

Ruud was in the right spot to get an interception when Grixby tipped a Bret Meyer pass on third-and-goal at the Nebraska 12-yard line with just over 2 minutes left in the third quarter.

An Iowa State touchdown would have cut the lead to 21-17. Instead, the Cornhuskers pulled ahead 28-10, as Ruud caught the tip and ran 93 yards for a touchdown.

"You never know when you're out there when you have a chance to make a play," said Ruud, who also returned an interception for a touchdown against Ball State the week before.

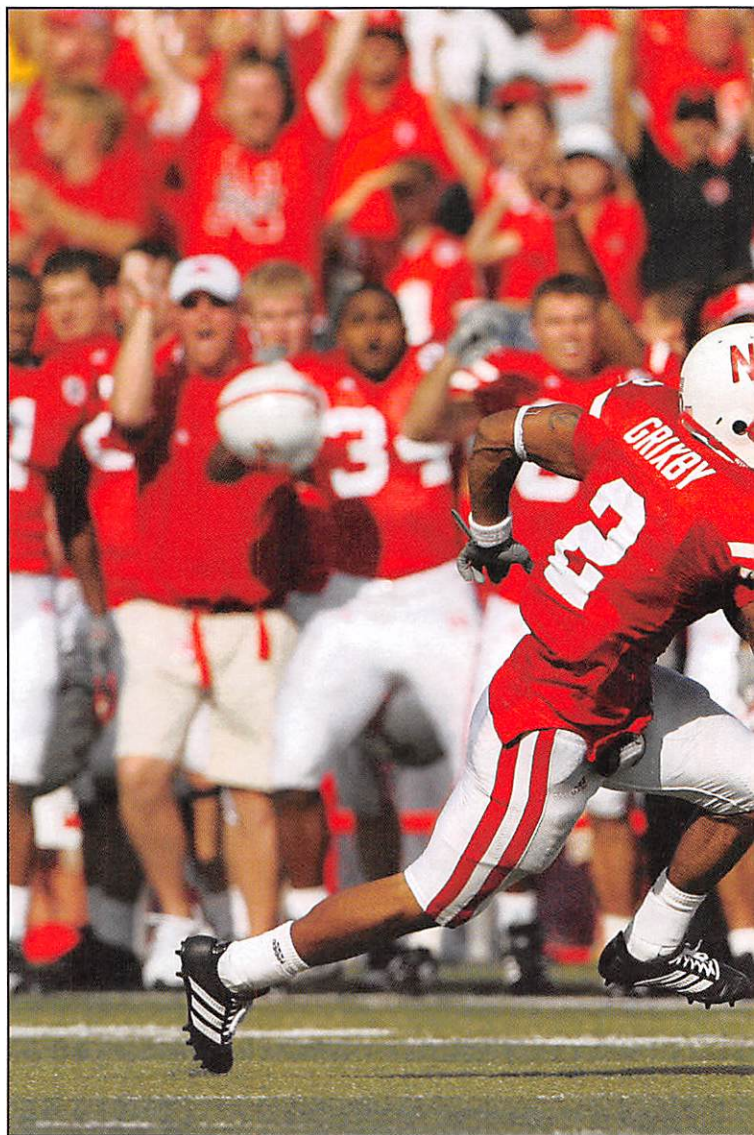
"You've just got to be ready to make that play."

Ruud, a high school running back, ran along the west sideline, to the north end zone, weaving back and forth, with a blocking assist from defensive tackle Shukree Barfield.

More accurately, the 6-foot-3, 310-pound Barfield shielded Ruud from would-be tacklers, including Meyer. Barfield "was running like a maniac. He was unbelievable," said Ruud.

"He just did a good job of running straight, trying to run right through that quarterback, making that quarterback unclear what to do. That's textbook of what you want

TURNING POINT



The Nebraska sideline reacts as cornerback Cortney Grixby takes an interception back 41 yards to the Iowa State 3. The interception, his second, came with 3:50 remaining to help seal the victory.

your D-line to do if an interception happens. You want them to sprint right through the quarterback and not slow down."

Grixby didn't get a good look at the play until Ruud was well on his way down field.

"He kept going back and forth, weaving," said Grixby. "I was like, 'Just run in.'"

A little weaving would have helped Grixby on the interception he returned to the Iowa State 3-yard line, according to Ruud. "I don't know why he's criticizing me. I scored and he didn't," Ruud said.

"Watch the film. He would have scored if he would have cut back."

Ruud said he would have helped Grixby with a block,

All About'



REPORT CARD

RUSHING OFFENSE

The Cornhuskers averaged 4.3 yards per carry, thanks to I-back Marlon Lucky's 41-yard touchdown run early in the third quarter. "We were trying to get into a run-oriented attack, and we just didn't quite get there," coach Bill Callahan said. "We tried to mix and match. But we didn't get into that rhythm we wanted to get into, didn't get that (running game) established." ★★

PASSING OFFENSE

Once again, the 2-minute offense was productive and enhanced Nebraska's passing statistics. Sam Keller mixed in a couple of runs with passes during a 10-play, 82-yard touchdown drive in only 1:35 late in the first half, then took the team 38 yards on five plays in 38 seconds just before the intermission. That drive ended at the Cyclone 15-yard line when time elapsed. ★★★★★

RUSHING DEFENSE

Iowa State averaged only 2.6 yards per rush, thanks to 52 yards in losses, including 18 on three sacks. "We were hoping we could run the ball better than we could today," Cyclones coach Gene Chizik said. "But they did some really nice things on defense, adjustments and things, to be able to negate our eight and nine-man front football, our running game." ★★★★★

PASSING DEFENSE

The Cyclones passed for 281 yards, to finish with 415 total yards. But mistakes in the passing game were critical. Nebraska had three interceptions. When Iowa State got behind, it had to throw. Defensively, "I thought our guys came ready to play," Callahan said. "I thought they were intense, focused." ★★★★★

SPECIAL TEAMS

Cortney Grixby's kick returns were crucial to momentum. The wind was a significant factor, particularly going into it. With the wind behind him, freshman Adi Kunalic sent one of his kickoffs through the uprights at the north end of the stadium. "The hidden yardage in special teams was really big," said Callahan. "That hidden yardage makes up for a lot of things." ★★★★★

too.

Grixby took advantage of some blocking by the kick-return team in the second quarter. Iowa State kicked off after taking a 10-0 lead with 7:47 remaining in the half. He fielded the ball at his own 2-yard line and returned it 51 yards to the Cyclone 47-yard line before being brought down.

He made it sound easy. The key to a kickoff return — he also had a 36-yard return after Iowa State cut the lead to 28-17 — is to "get some blocks, get a hole and just go through it," he said.

The 51-yard return "was huge, a great spark, a great lift," said coach Bill Callahan.

Nebraska capitalized on that field position with a seven-play, 47-yard touchdown drive to its first touchdown, on a 20-yard pass from I-back Marlon Lucky to H-back Sean Hill.

NUMBERS 102

Iowa State showed great balance with 102 offensive plays. The Cyclones ran 51 times and they passed 51 times. "We were out there a long time," said Cornhusker cornerback Cortney Grixby. No surprise there. "You don't get 100 (or more) plays very often in your lifetime," linebacker Bo Ruud said.

NEBRASKA-IOWA STATE NOTES

DEBT PAID

Junior fullback Thomas Lawson caught a pair of touchdown passes, the first receptions of his Cornhusker career. "I'm still a blocking back, but I caught the ball when I had to, I guess," Lawson said, a big smile crossing his face. On the first one, especially, "I tried to catch it with every part of my body so I wouldn't drop it like I did the first game, like the Nevada game."

He dropped a certain touchdown pass in the opener.

Afterward, he told quarterback Sam Keller he had made up for that mistake.

Lawson's performance was the first time in Cornhusker history that a fullback caught two touchdown passes in the same game. And he became only the third running back with two touchdown catches in the same game, joining Cory Ross (2005, Iowa State) and Ahman Green (1995, Kansas State).

LINEBACKERS RESPOND

In addition to Bo Ruud's game-high 14 tackles, Cornhusker linebackers Steve Octavien and Corey McKeon came up big. Octavien was credited with a career-high 11 tackles, and McKeon made a season-high nine tackles. Octavien's previous high was 10 against Texas last season.

"I think we showed we're a good defensive team. We just had a couple of down weeks," Ruud said. "I think we just continue to do what we've been doing, improving. We've got a lot of room to improve. So that's not even our best football today. We can go even further."

MORE RUUD

Ruud's 93-yard interception return for a touchdown in the third quarter was the third-longest in Cornhusker history. Bill Kosch and Willie Greenlaw each had 95-yard interception returns, Kosch against Texas A&M in 1971 and Greenlaw against Colorado in 1955. The previous long interception return for a Nebraska linebacker was 88 yards by Noel Martin against Missouri in 1962.

ON THE MARK, AGAIN

Junior I-back Marlon Lucky's 20-yard touchdown pass to Sean Hill was the second of his career, and third of Hill's career — all this season. "We worked on that play a lot, and it was executed beautifully," quarterback Sam Keller said. "Marlon can throw well when we call that play."

The touchdown pass was the fourth for Nebraska by a non-quarterback in the past two seasons. In addition to Lucky's two, holder Jake Wesch (Kansas State) and wide receiver Maurice Purify (Missouri) threw touchdown passes last season.

SWIFT ASCENT

Wide receiver Nate Swift caught four passes for 59 yards. The junior from Hutchinson, Minn., moved into the top five on the Cornhuskers' career-receiving yards list, passing Irving Fryar. Swift has 1,221 career receiving yards. He also moved into fourth place on the career-receptions list with 83.

Jeff Kinney (1969-71) dropped to fifth with 82 catches.

Swift joined Ruud, Brett Byford and Zack Bowman as captains for the game.

TEAM EFFORT

The week before, during the Ball State game, the Cornhusker defense drew boos from the crowd at Memorial Stadium. Not so this week. "I'm really proud of our team and the effort we put into it collectively to come away with this win. And that was the objective coming in here, to play well as a team," Callahan said. "Now we've got a lot of stuff to work on. But I'm proud of the way the kids played today."

BRIEFLY

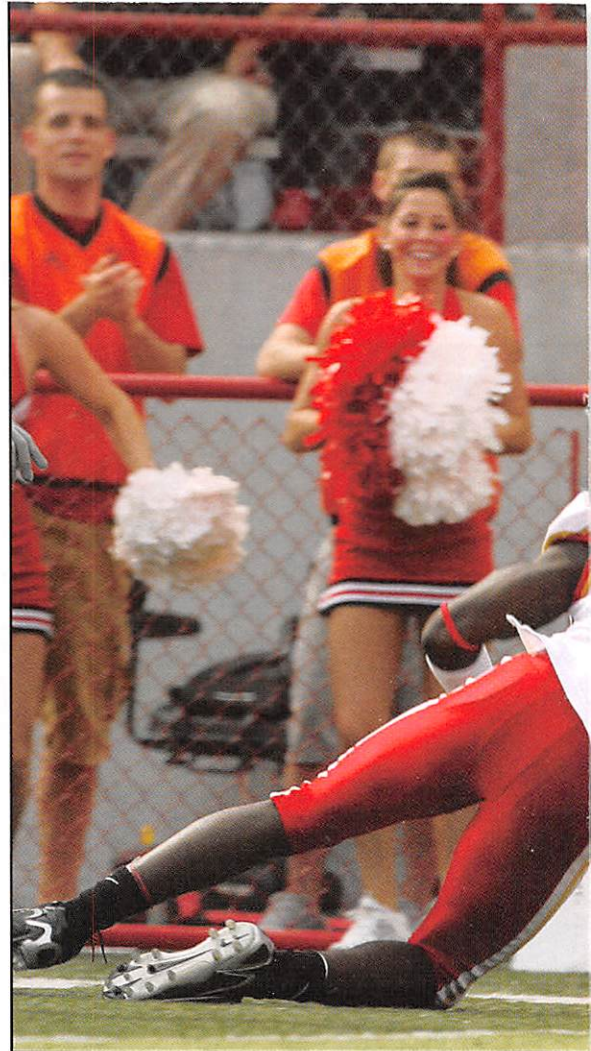
- Nebraska opened conference play with a victory for the 32nd time in the past 33 seasons. The Cornhuskers have won 30 consecutive conference home-openers.

- Freshman safety Eric Hagg played for the first time, on the Cornhuskers' kickoff team, bringing the total of true freshmen who have played this season to 10.

- The victory was the Cornhuskers' 15th in a row against Iowa State at Memorial Stadium, dating to 1977 when the Cyclones won 24-21.

- Nebraska extended its winning streak against Big 12 North Division opponents to eight, dating to a loss at Kansas in 2005.

- Senior wide receiver Terrence Nunn (2-18) has caught at least one pass in 32 consecutive games, six shy of Johnny Rodgers' school record. Nunn is 25 catches shy of Rodgers career record of 143. ■



Nebraska I-back Marlon Lucky crosses the goal line on a 41-y-

The Cornhuskers would take the lead for good before halftime with a 10-play, 82-yard touchdown drive in just 1 minute and 35 seconds. At that point, "we felt good," Grixby said. "We felt we had the momentum. It's like a pendulum. That's what Coach always says, back and forth."

"We got the momentum back and we knew that our offense was on the verge of breaking open. So we just wanted to be stable (defensively), bend but don't break. And that's what we did."

Ruud's interception return sapped any hope of a comeback the Cyclones might have had.

And Grixby had a hand in that, literally.

"Bo's always in the right spot," said Grixby.

As it turned out, they both were. ■



NU linebacker Bo Ruud



ard touchdown run early in the third quarter.

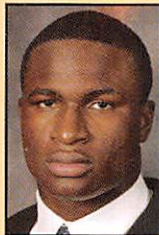


brings down ISU's Jason Scales for one of his team-leading 14 tackles.

Who Stood Out?

OFFENSE

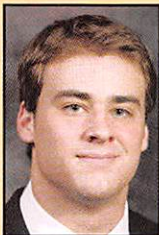
Junior I-back Marlon Lucky did a little bit of everything. He rushed for 107 yards and a touchdown, making up for a fumble that probably cost Nebraska a touchdown on its first possession. He caught four passes for 16 yards. And he threw a 20-yard touchdown pass to H-back/tight end Sean Hill. Lucky's touchdown came on a 41-yard run just 59 seconds into the third quarter to give the Cornhuskers a 21-10 lead and some separation. "I've got to give Marlon a lot of credit," coach Bill Callahan said.



Marlon Lucky

DEFENSE

Senior linebacker Bo Ruud stepped up for a second week in a row, returning an interception 93 yards for a touchdown and recording 14 tackles, the second-most in his career. He was credited with 15 tackles at Colorado in 2005. "He's a smart and savvy player," said Callahan.

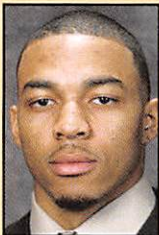


Bo Ruud

"He's very instinctive, has great awareness. He's the type of player that as the game progresses, he can feel and sense what's going to happen. He's a football junkie. He knows the game."

SPECIAL TEAMS

Senior cornerback Cortney Grixby returned two kickoffs for 87 yards. He returned a punt 12 yards. On defense, he intercepted two passes. And he tipped the pass that Ruud intercepted and returned 93 yards for a touchdown. The play was a slant pass, and Iowa State quarterback Bret Meyer might not have seen him, the 5-foot-9 Grixby said. "The shortness probably worked to my advantage."



Cortney Grixby

INJURY REPORT

Nebraska dealt with a few injuries. "Some guys did get dinged," coach Bill Callahan said.

The extent of those injuries (and to whom) wasn't immediately apparent, however.

Defensive tackle Ndamukong Suh and cornerback Cortney Grixby were among those who went to the sideline in the second quarter but were able to return and contribute.

Grixby had to be helped off the field with 38 seconds remaining in the first half, but he was back to start the second. "It was just a little ankle, bum ankle," he said.

GAME STATS

SCORING

Sept. 29, 2007

Memorial Stadium Lincoln, Neb.
Attendance 84,703

	1	2	3	4	F
Iowa State	3	7	0	7	17
Nebraska	0	14	14	7	35

First Quarter

	ISU	NU
ISU Culbertson 30-yard Field Goal 02:50	3	0
Drive: 12 plays 52 yds 5:36		

Second Quarter

	ISU	NU
ISU Scales 3-yard Run (Culbertson Kick) 07:47	10	0
Drive: 6 plays 48 yds 2:32		
NU Hill Pass from Lucky 20-yards (Henery Kick) 04:34	10	7
Drive: 7 plays 47 yds 3:03		

Third Quarter

	ISU	NU
NU Lucky 41-yard Run (Henery Kick) 14:01	10	21
Drive: 4 plays 54 yds 0:55		
NU Ruud TD INT 93-yards (Henery Kick) 02:13	10	28

Fourth Quarter

	ISU	NU
ISU Scales 6-yard Run (Culbertson Kick) 06:57	17	28
Drive: 17 plays 97 yds 4:07		
NU Lawson Pass from Keller 4-yards (Henery Kick) 02:25	17	35
Drive: 3 plays 3 yds 1:25		

TEAM STATS

	ISU	NU
Total First Downs	28	17
Rushing	9	4
Passing	16	13
Penalty	3	0
Rushing Attempts	51	30
Yards Gained Rushing	186	143
Yards Lost Rushing	52	13
Net Yards Rushing	134	130
Net Yards Passing	281	239
Passes Attempted	51	29
Passes Completed	26	19
Had Intercepted	3	1
Percent Completion	51.0%	65.5%
Yards per Attempt	5.5	8.2
Yards per Completion	10.8	12.6
Total Offensive Plays	102	59
Total Net Yards	415	369
Avg. Gain Per Play	4.1	6.3
Fumbles: No-Lost	3-1	2-2
Penalties: No-Yards	1-5	4-50
Punts: No-Yards	4-170	4-154
Avg. Per Punt	42.5	38.5
Avg. Net Punt	39.5	34.8
Punt Returns: No-Yards	3-15	1-12
Kickoff Returns: No-Yards	2-20	4-111
Interception Returns: No-Yards	1-0	3-134
Fumble Returns: No-Yards	1-34	0-0
Miscellaneous Yards	0	0
Possession Time	39:03	20:17
Third-Down Conversions	9-22	7-12
Percentage	40.9%	58.3%
Fourth-Down Conversions	2-4	0-0
Percentage	50.0%	0.0%
Sacks By: No-Yards	0-0	3-18



The crowd celebrates after a Nebraska touchdown.

INDIVIDUAL STATISTICS

IOWA STATE

	No	Gain	Lost	Net	Avg	TD	Lg
Scales	31	127	12	115	3.7	2	24
Meyer	12	43	15	28	2.3	0	11
Brandtner	1	4	0	4	4.0	0	4
Franklin	1	2	0	2	2.0	0	2
Arnaud	5	10	17	-7	-1.4	0	6
Robinson	1	0	8	-8	-8.0	0	0
Total	51	186	52	134	2.6	2	24

	Att	Comp	%	Int	Yds	TD	Lg
Meyer	51	26	51.0	3	281	0	28
Arnaud	0	0	0.0	0	0	0	0
Total	51	26	51.0	3	281	0	28

	No	Yds	TD	Lg
Blythe	5	84	0	28
Hamilton	6	72	0	18
Sumrall	6	56	0	24
Barkema	3	23	0	11
Bates	2	19	0	15
Scales	3	19	0	8
Catlett	1	8	0	8
Total	26	281	0	28

	No	Yds	TD	Lg
Williams	3	15	0	9
Total	3	15	0	9

	No	Yds	TD	Lg
Sumrall	1	11	0	11
Williams	1	9	0	9
Total	2	20	0	11

	No	Avg	Lg	Blk	TB	FC	50+	In	20
Brandtner	4	42.5	62	0	1	1	1	1	1
Total	4	42.5	62	0	1	1	1	1	1

	Solo	Asst	Tot	TFL	Sack	PD	FF	FR
Singleton	3	5	8	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Bowen	4	3	7	2-12	0-0	0	0	0
Smith	2	4	6	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Rubin	3	2	5	0.5-1	0-0	0	1	0
Banks	3	1	4	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Braaksma	2	2	4	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Parker	1	3	4	0.5-0	0-0	0	0	0

	No	Yds	TD	Lg
Singleton	1	0	0	0
Total	1	0	0	0

NEBRASKA

	No	Gain	Lost	Net	Avg	TD	Lg
Lucky	16	108	1	107	6.7	1	41
Glenn	8	28	1	27	3.4	0	10
Keller	4	7	0	7	1.8	0	2
Castille	1	0	0	0	0.0	0	0
Nunn	1	0	11	-11	-11.0	0	0
Total	0	143	13	130	4.3	1	41

	Att	Comp	%	Int	Yds	TD	Lg
Keller	28	18	64.3	1	219	2	60
Lucky	1	1	100.0	0	20	1	20
Total	29	19	65.5	1	239	3	60

	No	Yds	TD	Lg
Hardy	2	74	0	60
Swift	4	59	0	21
Purify	3	36	0	18
Hill	1	20	1	20
Nunn	2	18	0	9
Lucky	4	16	0	13
Lawson	2	10	2	6
Phillips	1	6	0	6
Total	19	239	3	60

	No	Yds	TD	Lg
Grixby	1	12	0	12
Total	1	12	0	12

	No	Yds	TD	Lg
Grixby	2	87	0	51
Hill	1	17	0	17
Asante	1	7	0	7
Total	4	111	0	51

	No	Avg	Lg	Blk	TB	FC	50+	In	20
Titchener	4	38.5	44	0	0	0	0	0	2
Total	4	38.5	44	0	0	0	0	0	2

	Solo	Asst	Tot	TFL	Sack	PD	FF	FR
Ruud	6	8	14	0-0	0-0	0	1	0
Octavien	7	4	11	1.5-11	0-0	0	0	0
Asante	5	4	9	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
McKeon	4	5	9	1-3	0-0	1	0	0
Murillo	7	2	9	0-0	0-0	1	0	0
Bowman	5	0	5	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Potter	2	3	5	0.5-3	0-0	0	0	1
Dillard	2	2	4	0-0	0-0	1	0	0
Suh	4	0	4	2-10	1-6	0	0	0
Brandenburg	3	0	3	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Dixon	1	2	3	1-1	0-0	0	0	0
Turner	1	2	3	2-10	1.5-9	0	0	0
Green	1	1	2	0-0	0-0	2	0	0
Martin	1	1	2	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Sievers	2	0	2	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Thenarse	1	1	2	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Wilson	2	0	2	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Barfield	1	0	1	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Blue	0	1	1	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Grixby	1	0	1	0-0	0-0	1	0	0
Nicks	1	0	1	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
O'Hanlon	1	0	1	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Poulosky	0	1	1	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Sand	0	1	1	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Steinkuhler	1	0	1	1-6	0-0	0	1	0
TEAM	0	0	0	0-0	0-0	1	0	0

	No	Yds	TD	Lg
Ruud	1	93	1	93
Grixby	2	41	0	41
Total	3	134	1	93

2007 SEASON STATS

RUSHING

	G	No Gain	Lost	Net	Avg	TD	Lg	Yd/G
Lucky, Marlon	5	108	588	23	565	5.2	6	41
Castille, Quentin	5	30	122	0	122	4.1	3	18
Glenn, Cody	3	24	85	9	76	3.2	2	20
Helu, Roy	2	10	39	0	39	3.9	0	13
Culbert, Major	3	5	35	0	35	7.0	1	17
Ganz, Joe	2	2	15	0	15	7.5	0	9
Nunn, Terrence	5	2	0	14	-14	-7.0	0	-2.8
Keller, Sam	5	13	13	39	-26	-2.0	0	-5.2

PASSING

	G	Att	Comp	% Int	Yds	TD	Lg	YD/G
Keller, Sam	5	185	121	65.4	7	1497	9	73
Lucky, Marlon	5	1	1	100.0	0	20	1	20
Ganz, Joe	2	1	1	100.0	0	19	0	19

RECEIVING

	G	No	Yds	Avg	TD	Lg	Yd/G
Purify, Maurice	4	19	268	14.1	1	38	67.0
Nunn, Terrence	5	17	219	12.9	0	30	43.8
Swift, Nate	5	16	206	12.9	1	21	41.2
Lucky, Marlon	5	28	205	7.3	1	20	41.0
Hill, Sean	5	7	184	26.3	3	73	36.8
Peterson, Todd	5	9	125	13.9	2	21	25.0
Hardy, Frantz	5	7	122	17.4	0	60	24.4
Glenn, Cody	3	4	46	11.5	0	19	15.3
Erickson, Dan	5	3	40	13.3	0	19	8.0
McNeill, Mike	2	1	25	25.0	0	25	12.5
Teafatiller, Hunter	4	3	21	7.0	0	11	5.2
Castille, Quentin	5	1	15	15.0	0	15	3.0
Sand, Andy	5	1	15	15.0	0	15	3.0
Young, Dreu	4	1	14	14.0	0	14	3.5
Lawson, Thomas	3	2	10	5.0	2	6	3.3
Paul, Niles	3	1	6	6.0	0	6	2.0
Phillips, J.B.	5	1	6	6.0	0	6	1.2
Helu, Roy	2	1	5	5.0	0	5	2.5
Brooks, Chris	1	1	4	4.0	0	4	4.0

PUNT RETURNS

	G	No	Yds	Avg	TD	Lg	Yd/G
Grixby, Cortney	5	7	36	5.1	0	16	7.2
Jones, Andre	4	2	25	12.5	0	24	6.2
Nunn, Terrence	5	1	0	0.0	0	0	0.0

KICKOFF RETURNS LEADERS

	G	No	Yds	Avg	TD	Lg	Yd/G
Grixby, Cortney	5	17	439	25.8	0	51	87.8
Jones, Andre	4	7	149	21.3	0	31	37.2

PUNTING

	G	No	Avg	Lg	Blk	TB	FC	50+	In	20
Titchener, Dan	5	20	41.6	51	0	1	7	1	6	6
Henery, Alex	5	1	32.0	32	0	0	0	0	0	1

FIELD GOALS

	G	Att	Made	Lg	Blkd
Henery, Alex	5	3	3	37	0
Kunalic, Adi	5	1	1	46	0

DEFENSE LEADERS

	G	Tack	Ass	Tot	TFL	Sack	PD	FF	FR
Octavien, Steve	5	27	10	37	5-28	0-4	2	0	0
Asante, Larry	5	15	18	33	0-0	0-0	1	1	0
Ruud, Bo	5	17	14	31	3-8	0-0	1	2	0
Murillo, Armando	5	17	8	25	0-0	0-0	3	0	0
McKeon, Corey	5	12	12	24	3-6	0-0	2	0	1
Potter, Zach	5	12	10	22	5-15	2-10	0	1	1
Dillard, Phillip	5	14	7	21	0-0	0-0	1	0	0
Suh, Ndamukong	5	16	3	19	6-29	1-6	0	0	1
Brandenburg, L.	5	11	4	15	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Turner, Barry	5	5	10	15	1-15	1-14	1	0	0

TEAM STATISTICS

	NU	OPP
Total First Downs	126	104
Rushing	41	44
Passing	73	53
Penalty	12	7
Total Net Yards	2339	2043
Total Plays	385	377
Yards Per Play	6.1	5.4
Yards Per Game	467.8	408.6
Rushing Attempts-Yards	198-803	202-948
Yards Per Attempt	4.1	4.7
Yards Per Game	160.6	189.6
Pass Att.-Comp.-Int.	187-123-7	175-92-7
Passing Yards	1536	1095
Yards Per Completion	12.5	11.9
Yards Per Game	307.2	219.0
Punting: No.-Avg.	21-41.2	28-40.8
Fumbles-Lost	6-5	11-3
Penalties-Yards	28-236	33-278
Sacks By-Yds. Lost	6-34	5-33
Third-Down Conversions	33-72	33-80
Conversion Pct.	45.8	41.2
Fourth-Down Conversions	4-6	5-8
Conversion Pct.	66.7	62.5
Avg. Time Of Possession	30:39	29:21

Scoring	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	OT	TOT
Nebraska	24	48	59	48	0	179
Opponents	10	51	49	23	0	133

2007 RESULTS, SCHEDULE

1 Sept. 1	Nevada (2-2), W 52-10	1-0
2 Sept. 8	@Wake Forest (2-2), W 20-17	2-0
3 Sept. 15	USC (4-0), L 49-31	2-1
4 Sept. 22	Ball State (3-2), W 41-40	3-1
5 Sept. 29	Iowa State (1-3), W 35-17	4-1
6 Oct. 6	@Missouri (4-0), 8:15 p.m., ESPN	
7 Oct. 13	Oklahoma St. (3-2), TBA (Homecoming)	
8 Oct. 20	Texas A&M (4-1), TBA	
9 Oct. 27	@Texas (4-1), TBA	
10 Nov. 3	@Kansas (4-0), TBA	
11 Nov. 10	Kansas State (3-1), TBA	
12 Nov. 23	@Colorado (3-2), 11 a.m., ABC	
Dec. 1	Big 12 Championship at San Antonio, Texas, 7 p.m., ABC	

SCOUTING REPORT

GAME 6

At Missouri Oct. 6

Location: Columbia, Mo.

Enrollment: 27,088

2007 record: 4-0

Coach: Gary Pinkel, 7th year

Series: Nebraska leads 63-34-3

8:15 p.m., ESPN
Faurot Field, Columbia, Mo.

Quick Facts

Missouri was idle after completing its 4-0 nonconference season with a 38-17 win over Illinois State Sept. 22.

The Tigers average 544.2 yards in total offense per game, while allowing 434.5, including 275.8 per game

through the air.

Redshirt freshman wide receiver Jeremy Maclin was named Big 12 Special Teams Player of the Week after amassing 238 all-purpose yards against Illinois State. The total included a 64-yard punt return for a touchdown.

Tiger to Watch

Junior quarterback Chase Daniel has completed 65.9 percent of his passes in throwing for 1,311 yards and 13 touchdowns this season. He has been intercepted four times in 176 attempts. In his first year as a starter in 2006, Daniel set MU single-season records for passing yards (3,527) and passing touchdowns (28).



Big 12 At-A Glance

North					South				
	W	L	W	L		W	L	W	L
Nebraska	1	0	4	1	Texas A&M	1	0	4	1
Kansas St.	1	0	3	1	Okla. St.	1	0	3	2
Colorado	1	0	3	2	Oklahoma	0	1	4	1
Kansas	0	0	4	0	Texas	0	1	4	1
Missouri	0	0	4	0	Texas Tech	0	1	4	1
Iowa State	0	1	1	4	Baylor	0	1	3	2

Saturday, Sept. 29

Nebraska 35, Iowa State 17
Kansas State 41, Texas 21
Colorado 27, Oklahoma 24
Texas A&M 34, Baylor 10
Oklahoma State 39, Sam Houston State 3
Texas Tech 75, Northwestern State 7

ON DECK

Oklahoma State Oct. 13

Location: Stillwater, Okla.

Enrollment: 31,800

2007 record: 3-2

Coach: Mike Gundy, 3rd year

Series: Nebraska leads 36-4-1

Time TBA
Memorial Stadium, Lincoln, Neb.



THE PAUL FELL PREDICTION

TENTATIVE 2-DEEPS

NEBRASKA OFFENSE

WR	87	Nate Swift**	6-2	200	Jr.
	16	Maurice Purify*	6-4	220	Sr.
LT	77	Carl Nicks*	6-5	330	Sr.
	65	Mike Smith	6-6	285	RFr.
LG	57	Jacob Hickman*	6-4	285	So.
	69	Jordan Picou	6-2	305	Sr.
C	59	Brett Byford*	6-3	300	Sr.
	67	Jacob Hickman*	6-4	285	So.
RG	70	Matt Slauson**	6-5	335	Jr.
	61	Mike Huff**	6-4	300	Jr.
RT	76	Lydon Murtha**	6-7	305	Jr.
	73	D.J. Jones	6-5	310	RFr.
HB	85	J.B. Phillips***	6-3	245	Sr.
	86	Sean Hill	6-3	250	Sr.
WR	83	Terrence Nunn***	6-0	190	Sr.
	7	Frantz Hardy**	6-1	190	Sr.
QB	9	Sam Keller	6-4	230	Sr.
	12	Joe Ganz*	6-1	200	Jr.
FB	48	Andy Sand	6-2	230	Sr.
	36	Thomas Lawson*	6-0	240	Jr.
IB	5	Marlon Lucky**	6-0	210	Jr.
	19	Quentin Castille	6-1	245	Fr.
PK	90	Alex Henery	6-2	170	RFr.

NEBRASKA DEFENSE

DE	99	Barry Turner**	6-3	270	Jr.
	88	Clayton Sievers**	6-4	245	Jr.
NT	93	Ndamukong Suh*	6-4	305	So.
	56	Shukree Barfield	6-4	310	Jr.
DT	43	Ty Steinkuhler**	6-3	285	Jr.
	97	Kevin Dixon	6-3	295	Jr.
DE	98	Zach Potter**	6-7	280	Jr.
	95	Pierre Allen	6-5	265	RFr.
SLB	51	Bo Ruud***	6-3	235	Sr.
	12	Blake Lawrence	6-2	220	Fr.
MLB	13	Corey McKeon**	6-1	225	Sr.
	52	Phillip Dillard*	6-1	250	So.
WLB	15	Steve Octavien*	6-0	240	Sr.
	40	Lance Brandenburg***	6-1	230	Sr.
LCB	5	Armando Murillo	6-0	195	Jr.
	25	Andre Jones*	6-0	190	Sr.
FS	30	Tierre Green***	6-1	200	Sr.
	3	Rickey Thenarse*	6-0	190	So.
SS	4	Larry Asante	6-1	210	So.
	9	Bryan Wilson*	6-1	205	Sr.
RCB	2	Cortney Grixby***	5-9	170	Sr.
	1	Zack Bowman*	6-2	200	Sr.
P	97	Dan Titchener*	6-0	200	Jr.

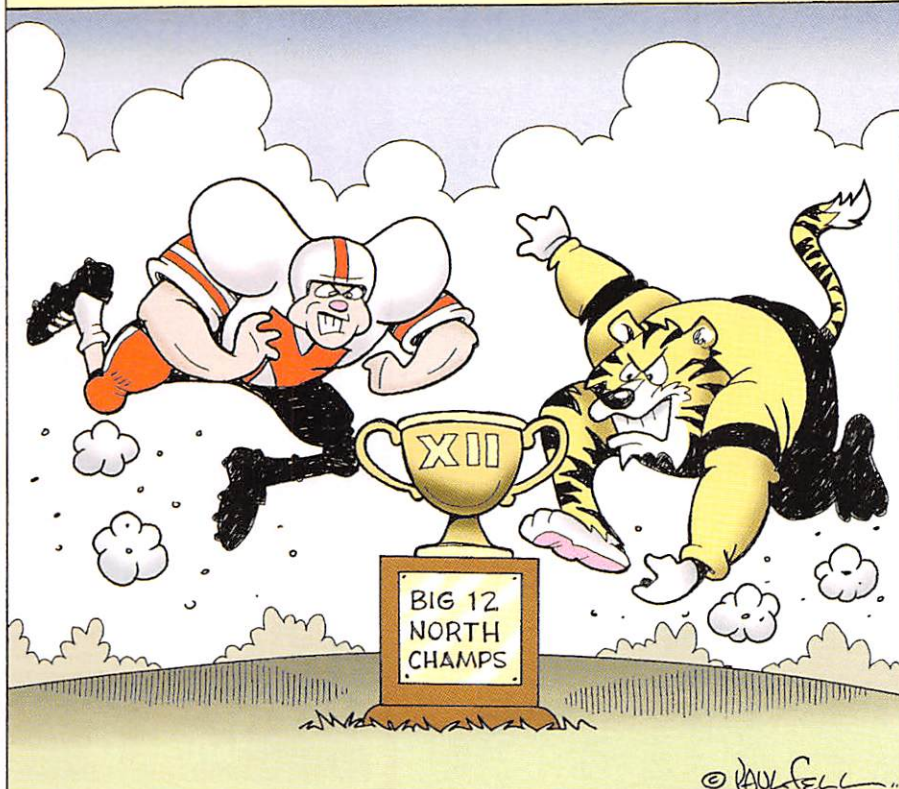
MISSOURI OFFENSE

XWR	2	William Franklin***	6-2	205	Sr.
	8	Jared Perry*	6-1	180	So.
LT	79	Tyler Luellen***	6-7	310	Sr.
	54	Chris Tipton	6-4	310	Sr.
LG	71	Monte Wyrick**	6-5	325	Sr.
	76	Ryan Madison*	6-5	305	Jr.
C	77	Adam Spieker***	6-3	305	Sr.
	62	Tim Barnes	6-4	305	RFr.
RG	78	Kurtis Gregory*	6-5	305	So.
	51	James Stigall	6-3	300	So.
RT	61	Colin Brown*	6-8	325	Jr.
	65	Mike Prince	6-4	300	RFr.
TE	82	Martin Rucker***	6-6	255	Sr.
	45	Chase Coffman**	6-6	245	Jr.
ZWR	84	Tommy Saunders**	6-0	210	Jr.
	85	Greg Bracey	6-2	215	Sr.
QB	10	Chase Daniel**	6-0	225	Jr.
	14	Chase Patton	6-5	220	Jr.
TB	22	Tony Temple**	5-9	205	Sr.
	1	Jimmy Jackson**	5-9	200	Jr.
HWR	9	Jeremy MacIn	6-1	200	RFr.
	4	Jason Ray**	6-1	215	Sr.
PK	99	Jeff Wolfert*	6-2	185	Jr.

MISSOURI DEFENSE

DE	48	Tommy Chavis*	6-2	280	Jr.
	47	Jaysen Corbett	6-4	270	Jr.
DT	94	Ziggy Hood**	6-4	295	Jr.
	91	Charles Gaines	6-1	305	Sr.
NT	99	Lorenzo Williams***	6-1	295	Sr.
	96	Jaron Baston*	6-1	295	So.
DE	38	Stryker Sulak**	6-5	250	Jr.
	93	John Stull	6-4	245	RFr.
SLB	5	Van Alexander**	6-0	235	Jr.
	18	Steve Redmond*	6-0	235	Jr.
MLB	34	Brock Christopher**	6-2	245	Jr.
	33	Luke Lambert	6-3	230	Fr.
WLB	12	Sean Weatherspoon*	6-1	240	So.
	2	Connell Davis*	6-3	220	So.
CB	3	Darnell Terrell**	6-3	205	Sr.
	6	Paul Simpson*	6-2	190	Sr.
SS	13	Pig Brown*	5-11	205	Sr.
	8	Justin Garrett	6-2	210	Jr.
FS	1	William Moore**	6-1	220	Jr.
	15	Del Howard*	5-11	200	So.
CB	28	Hardy Ricks*	6-0	195	So.
	19	Carl Gettis	5-11	200	Fr.
P	90	Adam Crosssett***	6-3	225	Sr.

NEBRASKA vs. MISSOURI



OCTOBER 6, 2007
HUSKERS TRAVEL TO TIGERS' DEN TO DETERMINE WHO RULES THE ROOST IN BIG 12 NORTH!

Picks

Oct.
6



Brian Hill
Editor



Mike Babcock
Cont. Editor



Terry Douglass
G.I. Independent



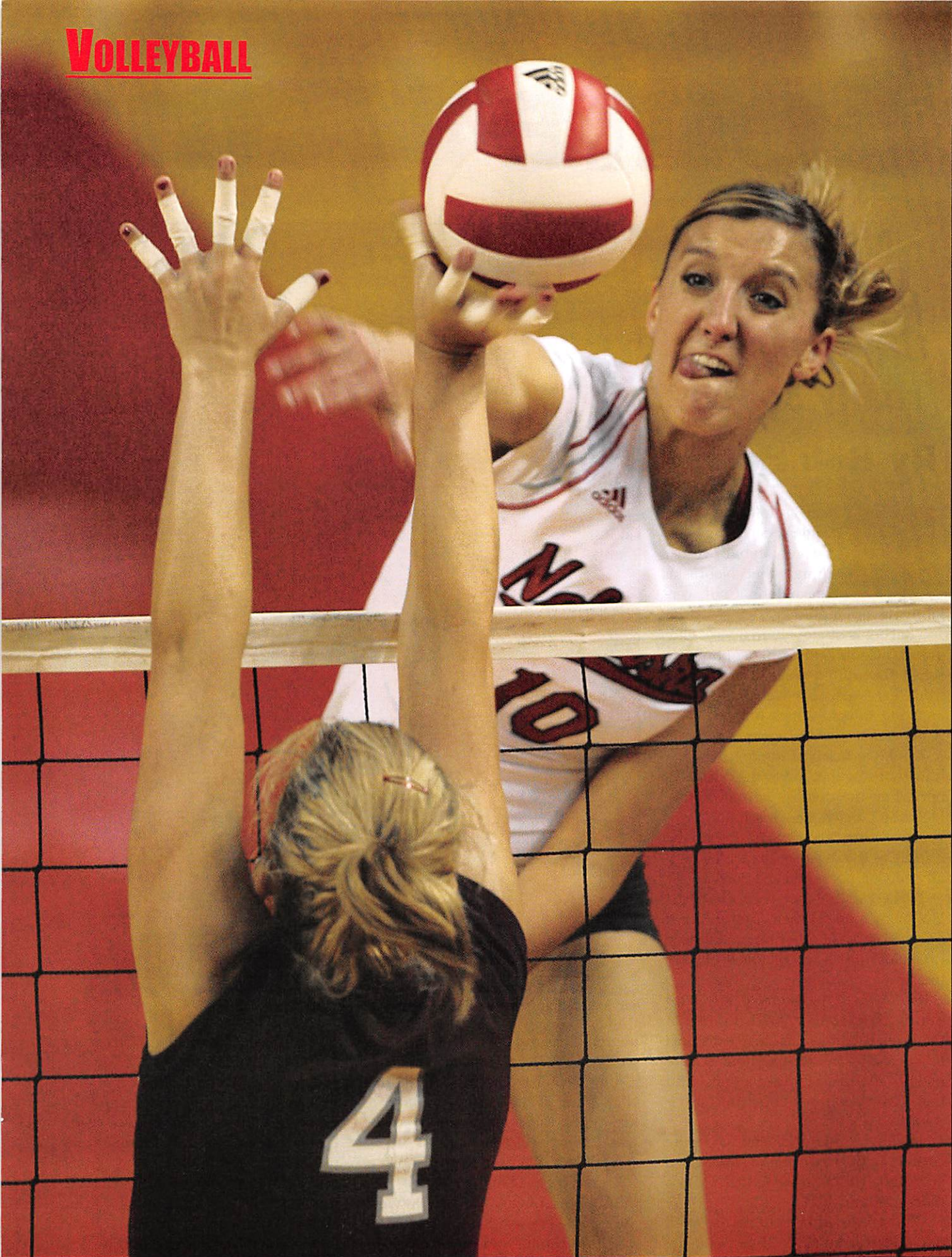
Sean Callahan
KFAB/Rivals.com



Steve Sipple
Lincoln Journal Star
(Guest)

Nebraska @Missouri	Nebraska 37, Missouri 35	Missouri 35, Nebraska 31	Missouri 36, Nebraska 30	Nebraska 41, Missouri 38	Missouri 41, Nebraska 35
Kansas @Kansas State	Kansas St. 24, Kansas 23	Kansas St. 21, Kansas 17	Kansas St. 21, Kansas 17	Kansas 31, Kansas St. 24	Kansas St. 24, Kansas 21
Oklahoma @Texas	Oklahoma 20, Texas 17	Oklahoma 28, Texas 24	Oklahoma 28, Texas 14	Oklahoma 38, Texas 28	Oklahoma 24, Texas 17
Florida @LSU	Florida 17, LSU 14	LSU 21, Florida 18	LSU 19, Florida 13	LSU 27, Florida 21	LSU 24, Florida 21
Last Week Season	1-3 13-7	2-2 16-4	1-3 14-6	2-2 16-4	2-2 13-7

VOLLEYBALL



Junior outside hitter Jordan Larson had a match-high 15 kills and 10 digs in No. 1 Nebraska's 30-14, 30-20, 30-25 sweep of Texas A&M on Sept. 22 at the NU Coliseum (above). Four nights later, Larson came back with a season-high 17 kills, 11 digs and three aces in a 30-18, 30-24, 30-18 sweep at Kansas.

Some 'Amaz

NU setter does 'things that we can't really coach'

By Bob Hamar

Rachel Holloway does some special things on the volleyball court, things that Nebraska coach John Cook certainly never taught her.

"Rachel is obviously in a very elite group," Cook said of his sophomore setter. "I continue to see improvement from her week by week. She does amazing things, things that we can't really coach. She's a big-time player."

Cook certainly didn't teach her how to throw that kill to the deep corner when the defense is off balance. He didn't teach her when to "two-shoot," which is a little dump into the middle of the defense. In fact, he usually gets on her when she does it.

"It keeps the other teams honest," Holloway said. "When I get a kill, it opens up a lot of other hitters because (the blockers) have to focus on me, too."

Holloway is in the front row with middle blocker Tracy Stalls for two of the three rotations. Having Stalls next to her helps because opponents are usually double-teaming Stalls, and that leaves Holloway open to do her thing.

Holloway used the deep kill to the corner with inconsistent success a year ago. This year, she's been much more accurate.

"I just learned how to do the deep one," Holloway said. "I've done the two-shoot my whole life."

Of course Holloway's main job isn't to get kills but to set up her high-



Sophomore setter Rachel Holloway guides an offense that leads the country in kills and assists per game while ranking second in hitting percentage.

powered teammates. The Huskers, who hit .296 as a team in 2006 were hitting a robust .338 through the first 10 matches of 2007. The school record for hitting percentage for a season was .331 set in 1986.

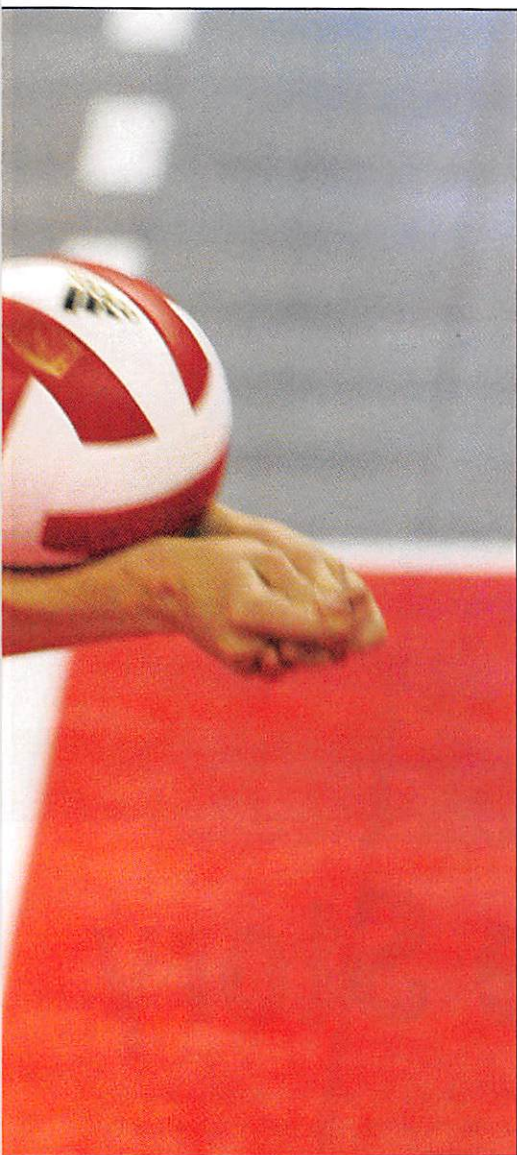
Stalls at .500 and Kori Cooper at .402 are a big part of the Huskers' .338 hitting percentage. The sets between the middle blockers and the setter are based on timing and have to be executed perfectly to work. If the setter is a little off or the hitter not quite in the right place, things fall apart.

That hasn't happened much to the Huskers this season.

"We're much stronger in that area this year than we were last year," Cook said. "It's like in the old option football days. Quarterbacks just didn't come in and master the option offense. It took a long time for them to understand it. It's all based on timing and reads as well."

Holloway is comfortable this year, much more so than a year ago. Opposing coaches appreciate her contributions to the success of the

zing Things'



Huskers. Texas coach Jerritt Elliott certainly noticed Holloway in Nebraska's 3-0 sweep over the Longhorns to open Big 12 Conference play.

"I think their setter is spectacular," Elliott said. "She doesn't get enough credit."

Holloway showed a glimpse of that special ability in a match against Texas A&M Sept. 22 at the NU Coliseum. Midway through the second game, Holloway sprinted to the corner to retrieve an errant pass and sent a perfect bump set to the far

antenna where Christina Houghtelling slammed it down for a kill.

"That's big-time," Cook said. "I call those national championship points. With a game on the line, instead of just giving the ball back or bumping it over, you have got to either kill it or put the other team out of system so they can't come back at you."

Holloway doesn't have long to make decisions like that. There might be a second, sometimes less and sometimes more, for Holloway to decide who she is going to set.

Should she go to 2006 AVCA player of the year Sarah Pavan? Or how about Houghtelling, the 2005 AVCA player of the year? She could go to first-team All-American Jordan Larson or Stalls, a second-team All-American.

All this and more goes through Holloway's mind, both before the pass and after it.

In the end, Holloway makes like Tom Hanks in "Cast Away" and listens to the ball.

"I always have a plan in my mind of what I want to do," Holloway said. "But the ball says a lot to me. If the pass is off, I obviously can't do it. But I try to think of where I'm going to set."

With so many talented hitters at her disposal, Holloway always has three or four strong options on every play. Her challenge is to pick the best option and at the same time, keep everybody happy.

"Off the court I'm always afraid they're going to come up to me and be like, 'Why aren't you setting me?'" Holloway said of her teammates. "I even look at the stats, and I've been trying to mix it around a lot and get every hitter involved."

"What's hard is with so many good hitters, I'm just trying to get them in a position where they can score."

So, Holloway is asked, has anyone ever complained about a lack of sets

coming their way.

"No, not really," Holloway said. After a pause, she added, "No comment?"

Holloway doesn't really need to say anything. Her play speaks for itself. ■

Bob Hamar covers the Nebraska volleyball team for the Grand Island (Neb.) Independent. He can be reached at bob.hamar@theindependent.com

RESULTS, SCHEDULE

AVCA Showcase

At Qwest Center Omaha

Aug. 24	vs. Tennessee	W 3-0
Aug. 25	vs. UCLA	W 3-1

Holiday Inn Classic

NU Coliseum/Qwest Center Omaha

Aug. 31	vs. Creighton (NU)	W 3-0
Sept. 2	vs. Penn St. (Omaha)	W 3-0
Sept. 3	vs. Cal Poly (NU)	W 3-0

Ameritas Players Challenge

NU Coliseum

Sept. 7	vs. Duke	W 3-0
Sept. 8	vs. New Mexico St.	W 3-0

(Home matches at NU Coliseum, unless noted)

Sept. 12	Texas	W 3-0
Sept. 15	@Texas Tech	W 3-0
Sept. 22	Texas A&M	W 3-0
Sept. 26	@Kansas	W 3-0
Sept. 29	Baylor	7 p.m.
Oct. 3	Kansas State	7 p.m.
Oct. 6	@Colorado	7:30 p.m.
Oct. 10	Iowa State	7 p.m.
Oct. 13	@Oklahoma	TBA
Oct. 17	@Missouri	6:30 p.m.
Oct. 20	Kansas	TBA
Oct. 21	Hawaii (Devaney)	5 p.m.
Oct. 24	@Texas	6:30 p.m.
Oct. 31	Missouri	7 p.m.
Nov. 3	@Kansas State	7 p.m.
Nov. 7	Colorado	7 p.m.
Nov. 11	@Iowa State	3 p.m.
Nov. 14	@Texas A&M	6:30 p.m.
Nov. 17	Oklahoma	7 p.m.
Nov. 21	@Baylor	6:30 p.m.
Nov. 24	Texas Tech	7 p.m.

Nov. 29-Dec. 2 NCAA First/Second Rounds At Campus Sites

Dec. 7-8 NCAA Regionals At Campus Sites

Dec 13-15 NCAA Final Four At Sacramento, Calif.



Senior Allison Stewart tied her career best with a 1-under-par 70 to tie for sixth at the Chip-N Club Invitational Sept. 10-11.

The Rest of the Story

Senior golfer Stewart has continued to work her way up as a Husker

BY KATELYN KERKHOVE

Unlike many of her Nebraska golf teammates, Allison Stewart is from a small town.

She entertains everyone with stories about Vermillion, S.D., which has a population of 10,000 people thanks to a local college — the University of South Dakota.

Even Nebraska golf coach Robin Krapfl remembers the one about the

two-seater bike or the other one about the pedal cars.

"She has a unique personality, very down home, kind of country type," Krapfl said. "But, I mean, she is just the greatest person in the world. She would do anything for you. Any one of her family would do anything for you. Put it this way, she rode a two-seat bicycle every day to school in South Dakota. We get her telling sto-

ries about it, and every time she has another story, she just cracks everybody up."

Basically, Stewart grew up willing to try and do anything, especially if it could win her a trophy. She did the tractor pull and other events at the local rodeo every summer. She also competed in several sports. Her favorites were basketball and, of course, golf.

A fifth-year senior for the Huskers, Stewart has worked her way up from an unknown walk-on to one of the biggest contributors on Krapfl's team.

This year, she is tied with senior Elli Brown for the lowest stroke average on the team at 75.33. Her scores also have been used in both tournaments so far this fall, and she matched

her career-best when she finished 1-under par for sixth place at the Chip-N Club Invitational at Woodland Hills Golf Club on Sept. 11.

Stewart also has been a driving force for Nebraska over the last couple years, especially when the team qualified for the NCAA regional tournament last year and in 2005. Also in 2005, the Huskers made it to the final round of the NCAA Championships, notching the best championship round in school history during the final day of competition.

"It was pretty cool because when I came in I had no idea what to expect," Stewart said of her sophomore experience in 2005. "But I knew Nebraska was good. They had won a national title the year before I came in, and that's what we strive for. So I always knew it was our goal."

But Stewart is not above admitting her luck when it came to finding Nebraska — or rather, Nebraska finding her.

Thanks to family friend and Nebraska wrestling coach Mark Manning, Stewart had a connection that saved her career.

Since she was from such a small town, finding her way on to junior

club teams or to tournaments where college coaches usually go to recruit was difficult. But Manning knew her talents and gave her name to Krapfl, who decided to look into the potential recruit.

"She had some success in South Dakota," Krapfl said. "She was a good student and seemed like a very hard worker. The year she came in, she was part of a big recruiting class, but something about her made me know she would be good for our team."

But when she came, Stewart's personality wasn't enough to disguise her raw talent. Krapfl said there were three things that needed improving: Stewart's lack of experience under pressure, her short game and her distance.

So what exactly did Stewart have?

"It all starts with her work ethic because she has put in the time and hours to get where she is right now," Krapfl said. "It was just a matter of time that her experience and her confidence collided with all the work she's put in."

The collision, it seems, has caused an explosion.

Now on scholarship, Stewart has compiled a list of achievements her

brother, Donny, used against her when he beat her in a round during the summer.

From NGCA Scholastic All-American through 2005 to 2007, to Big 12 Conference Championship finishes of 20th and 26th place and a 31st place finish at the NCAA Central Regional Tournament in 2006, if it weren't for her stories and personality, maybe Stewart's teammates would forget she's from a small town.

Throughout the five years Krapfl has worked, played and traveled with Stewart, she said the graduating senior hasn't changed much. "She's as nice now as she was when she was a freshman," Krapfl said.

But on the golf course there has been a very positive development. It's a confidence that comes from experience and success, something Stewart feels lucky to have earned.

"I'm just really excited that I was actually given the opportunity," Stewart said. "It's not just golf that I've been able to accomplish. I've been able to get a college degree and meet a lot of people and make a lot of friendships."

"It's not only golf, but that's what makes it fun." ■

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Plenty Quick



Griffin was told she lacked the quickness to succeed at soccer

By Mike Babcock

The irony is not lost on Kelsey Griffin or her coaches.

They "laugh when they hear that," Nebraska's All-Big 12 forward said.

Griffin might have focused on soccer instead of basketball if she hadn't been told she lacked the quickness to succeed at soccer. Now, quickness is among her basketball assets.

At 6-foot-2, she's not overly tall for a post player. But quickness and speed help her compensate. In addition, "I think seeing the floor was helped by soccer, too," she said. "It's kind of funny how parallel the sports can be."

Soccer was her first athletic passion. Its appeal was the result of her older brother Geoff, who also played the sport. "I wanted to be my big brother when I was little," said Griffin. "I didn't want to be like him; I wanted to be him. So it was anything to get to play with him and his friends."

Geoff eventually quit playing soccer, but she would have continued if not for what the soccer coaches perceived as her lack of quickness. "I really loved soccer," she said.

As it turned out, she really loved basketball, and volleyball, too, though her mom had to coerce her into playing when she was a freshman at Chugiak High School in Eagle River, Alaska.

She didn't mind volleyball, really, just the tryouts and camps associated with it. Turns out her mom wasn't being unreasonable about volleyball. She never forced Kelsey to do anything.

"She knew I would have fun with it," Griffin said. "She knew her kids."

Kelsey was the most competitive of the three kids — she also has a younger sister, Jayme. Kelsey has always been competitive, by her own admission as well as the confirmation of others.

"It was just this summer when we were hanging out, my dad told me, 'You've always been so much more competitive than your siblings. It's just something you had,'" she said.

"So I guess I've been really competitive since before I realized it."

She first remembers being competitive in school, wanting to get the best grades. Obviously, that has paid off. She

Kelsey Griffin averaged 15 points and 8.3 rebounds per game last season as a sophomore.

was a first-team academic all-conference honoree in 2007, only recently declaring biology as her major. The anatomy class she took in the summer didn't persuade her otherwise.

The classroom competitiveness carried over to athletics. "My friends have told me I'm a little too competitiveness at times, and it's not that much fun," said Griffin. "I think I've calmed down since I've come to Nebraska, though maybe not so much on the basketball court. But so much energy and so much time is put into basketball that I'm able to relax better than I used to before."

She channels the competitiveness into basketball now. But it wasn't always that way, or more accurately, it wasn't just basketball that provided an outlet. Growing up, she just wanted to be doing something, anything to be active. "I'm not very good at sitting still," she said.

Her parents kept her and her siblings busy, playing catch or whatever. She didn't necessarily develop as a basketball player by relentlessly shooting at a goal attached to the garage.

By her junior year in high school, however, it was becoming apparent her basketball skills, however they had developed, were such that she could continue in the sport after high school.

She didn't realize her potential. Others did. Denver University was the first to send her a recruiting letter. Alaska-Anchorage was the second. "I guess I probably heard it enough times from other people, so it was something I started to believe myself, 'Oh, this is really happening,'" Griffin said.

She had watched games at Alaska-Anchorage, and had played youth-league all-star games on the school's court.

When those first letters arrived, "I was like, 'Oh, my gosh,'" she said.

"I never thought I would ever play at the next level."

But play she has, and well. She averaged 15 points and 8.3 rebounds last season, shooting 54.6 percent from the field, with 10 double-doubles (to give her 13 for her career). She was just the fourth sophomore in school history to earn first-team all-conference recognition.

The others were Kiera Hardy, Karen Jennings and Maurice Ivy.

The Huskers are talented. But except for Griffin and senior Danielle Page, they're either young or inexperienced or both. Page is the only senior and Tay Hester, a junior college transfer, is the only other junior besides Griffin. The rest are sophomores and freshmen.

Among the most important things Griffin can bring to the team is leadership, "setting the tone," she said. "I really try to work my hardest. Underclassmen are definitely looking for leadership.

"Because I've been so fortunate and blessed to be successful in the past, I think they can look at that and see how hard work really pays off. I don't like to toot my own horn; it's not something I'm good at. But I would have to say that the leadership I can provide is leading by example."

She's also trying to become more vocal "because that's what we really need this year."

Her success has come from hard work, combined with skills that can't be taught. To be told she wasn't quick enough to play soccer "was a blessing in disguise," she said.

Quickness has helped set her apart on a basketball court. ■



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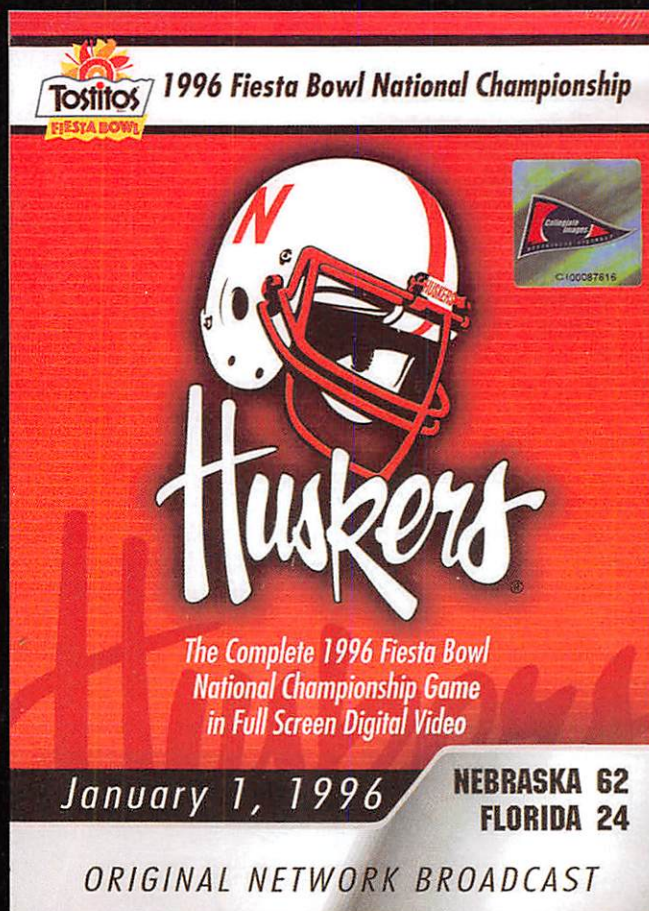
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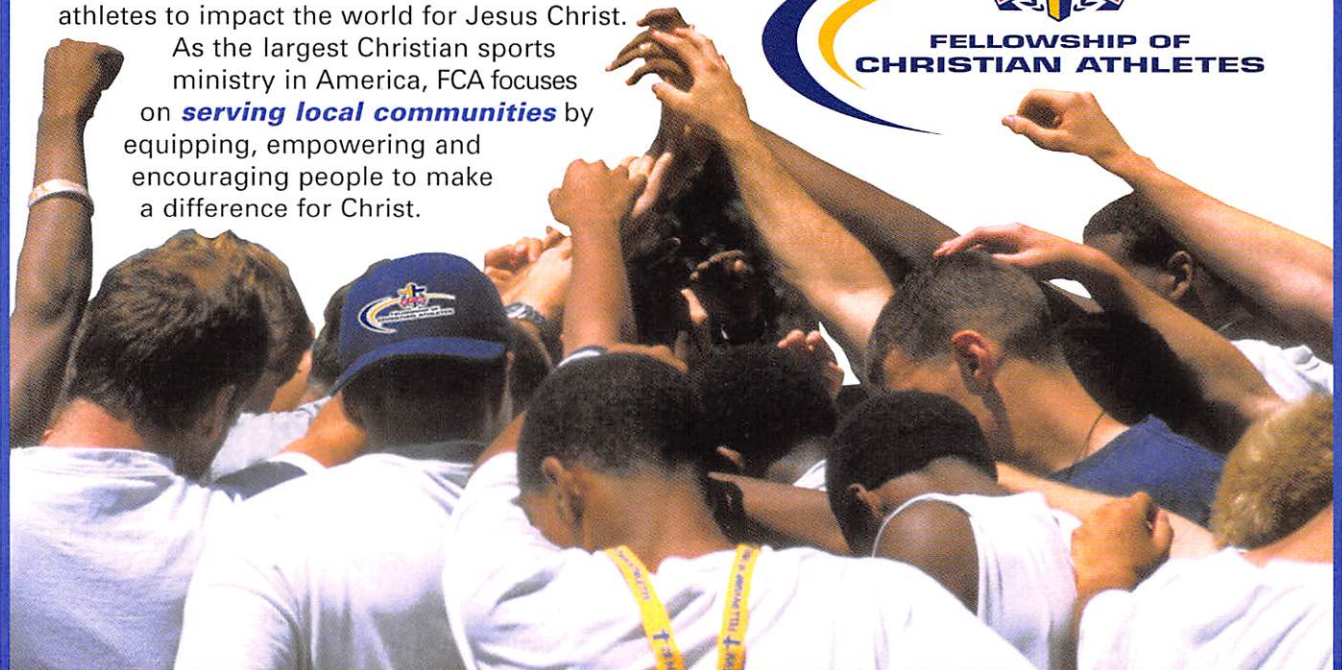


Sophomore midfielder Julie Berkshire (24) is congratulated by teammates after one of her two goals in Nebraska's 5-1 victory over St. Louis Sept. 21 at the NU Soccer Field.

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Looking for Linebackers

Make no mistake; Quentin Castille will do his best to avoid a would-be tackler in the open field. When the freshman running back finds himself one-on-one against a linebacker, however, well . . .

"I love linebackers," he said. "That's when I'll bring out the 'truck stick' on them."

Video-game aficionados will immediately understand. "Truck stick" is a function introduced on Madden NFL 2006 allowing a ball carrier to lower his shoulder and break tackles.

"A lot of people talk to me about bringing out the 'truck stick,'" Castille said.

And when he does, "I think I'm Jerome Bettis," he said.

Bettis, a six-time NFL Pro Bowl running back who retired following the 2006 season, was nicknamed "The Bus" because of his ability to run over would-be tacklers.

At 5-foot-11 and 243 pounds, he carried a bus-like load into contact.

Castille has similar size. He's listed at 2 inches taller and 2 pounds heavier than "The Bus." And he earned his own heavy-duty, vehicular nickname after rushing for 78 yards against Nevada.

Some folks, he wasn't sure who, were calling him "Baby Hummer."

"I've never heard that before," he said. "It was all right."

During his high school career in La Porte, Texas, "they used to call me 'Man Child.' I'm kind of big like a grown man," Castille said, as if some sort of explanation were necessary.

Running backs coach Randy Jordan has described Castille as "very, very candid when it comes to his running style. He wants to run over people instead of around them," said Jordan.

"I've seen big guys who think they're 180 pounds (and try to run that way). But he knows his limitations, and he wants to use it to the best of his ability. I love that about the kid."

Cornhusker fans have taken to Castille, also. In fact, as is the case with most high-profile recruits, they knew who he was before he began training camp in August — he arrived in June.

Junior running back Marlon Lucky told him that would happen. Lucky "made jokes about it when I first got here. 'You're going to be walking, and people are going to call your name,'" Castille said. "I'm walking down the street, 'Hi Quentin.' It's crazy. In a way it's creepy, though."

"People calling your name; you're like, 'Who just said that?' That happened a lot to me in the summer. 'Hi Quentin.' 'Hi, I don't know you, but hi.'"

They knew him and his accomplishments at La Porte High

School. As a senior, he rushed for more than 1,800 yards and 22 touchdowns, averaging nearly 8 yards per carry. In one game he rushed for more than 300 yards and six touchdowns. In another, he rushed for 250 yards.

Rivals.com rated him four stars and the nation's No. 2 fullback prospect. Though he carried on a couple of fullback traps in the opener, Nebraska recruited him as an I-back.

He also can catch the ball. "I have real good hands," said Castille.

His high school ran a spread offense, and "you have to have hands," he said. "So (for) a big guy like me to have hands is . . . it wouldn't say it's unreal, but it's unheard of, almost."

He has speed as well as size. "He's a big-time back," coach Bill Callahan said. "He can run people over. He has the profile that you look for out of a big back. That's what he does best. When you're down in those short-yardage and goal-line situations, it's good to pound the big backs."

Castille didn't mind when recruiting analysts listed him as a fullback, even though that wasn't his position. "I didn't really

have like a big issue about it," he said.

He compares his running style to that of former Cornhusker Lawrence Phillips.

Like most freshmen, Castille quickly learned how different the speed of the collegiate game is. And that was an eye-opener. "I guess coming from Texas, I thought that the Texas way of playing football was at a real high standard, and I thought that coming here, I would be just as talented," he said.

"But I see that college is a big level to jump to."

The first two weeks of training camp, Castille

struggled with the plays and his confidence wavered. "I was down on myself every day because I felt I was failing," he said.

He had a playbook soon after signing a letter of intent, and he was committed to studying it. But looking at diagrams on a page can be a poor substitute. "It was just a whole bunch of writing at first," Castille said. "I'm like a hands-on kind of guy. If I see it, I'll learn it."

Training camp gave him the opportunity. Even so, the experience was humbling.

"Everybody was saying, 'You'll be good.' I was like, 'I hope man,'" he said.

By the opening game, with Cody Glenn slowed by injury, he was familiar enough with particular aspects of the offense not just to play but to get 18 carries.

"I bring a lot of power," Castille said. "I bring a lot of speed, too, downhill running."

And when he has to, he'll bring out that "truck stick."



Freshman Quentin Castille (19) was Nebraska's second-leading rusher during the nonconference schedule and scored three touchdowns.

Quick Hits

NFL SYSTEM, COLLEGIATE MINDSET

Coach Bill Callahan has brought a pro-style offense to Nebraska as well as professional experience and terminology — preseason practice is now training camp. But the atmosphere is collegiate. The coaches pay close attention to the many demands on a student-athlete's time and energy.

"There's a sensitivity to that," he said recently. "That sensitivity is realized dramatically by our staff. I can't even begin to tell you how many times our coaches have our players over at their homes with their families to take some of that pressure off them and to alleviate those feelings of a business-type atmosphere and environment. I would tell you our environment is not like that. It's very collegiate-like."

"It's made for the student-athlete to come in, feel comfortable and express themselves if there are any problems. We all have a great relationship with our players and an open-door policy."

Players can "express themselves if something is bothering them," he said.

NO OFFENSE, REALLY

Freshman Prince Amukumara saw his first action of the season against Ball State. Nebraska recruited him as an athlete and he has begun his career as a defensive back.

"I definitely wanted to play offense, but they're trying to get me on the field as soon as possible, and they're stacked (on offense)," Amukumara said during training camp.

"So defensive back is where they need help."

He played running back his final two seasons at Apollo High School in Glendale, Ariz., rushing for 2,106 yards and 24 touchdowns and catching 22 passes for 252 yards and six touchdowns as a senior. He was the Class 4A state champion in the 100 and 200 meters.

In a perfect world, he'd be playing "maybe like a slotback or wide receiver," he said.

But he has no complaints about playing cornerback.

"We're utilizing him on special teams and also our 'sub' packages in the defensive backfield," said Callahan. "We're trying to get him more playing time, starting with special teams and then allowing him to grow and be nurtured in the 'sub' packages. That's his process right now."

FIRST TIME FOR EVERYTHING

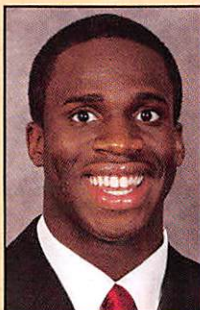
Senior H-back Sean Hill caught three passes for 129 yards and a touchdown against Ball State and senior wide receiver Maurice Purify caught six passes for 122 yards and a touchdown. The last time two Cornhuskers had 100 or more receiving yards in the same game was . . . never.

BERRINGER AWARD

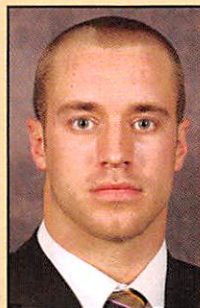
Junior wide receiver Todd Peterson is this year's recipient of the Brook Berringer Memorial Endowed Scholarship. An on-field presentation was made prior to the Ball State game.

The scholarship is awarded to a football student-athlete in the memory of former Cornhusker quarterback Brook Berringer, who died in a plane crash on April 18, 1996. Criteria for the scholarship include community service, high ideals, excellent character and integrity.

Peterson was selected to the 2007 Brook Berringer



Prince Amukumara



Todd Peterson

Citizenship Team and is a member of the Nebraska Student-Athlete Advisory Committee. The two-time, first-team Academic All-Big 12 honoree majors in nutrition, exercise and health science, with a cumulative grade-point average of 3.726.

AN 80-YARDER

Adi Kunalic would like to send a kickoff through the uprights. "Hopefully, I can," he said early in the season. "I would definitely have to have some wind behind me. I will try. I did it once this summer. I had a pretty heavy wind behind me. I only did it once, and it was kind of funny to see. Hopefully, one of these days we will have a strong wind so we can see what happens to the crowd after that one."

Callahan would be satisfied if the true freshman continues to send his kickoffs into the end zone for touchbacks. He had 11 touchbacks in nonconference play. Nebraska had 12 all of last season.

GUY WATCH LIST

Junior Dan Titchener was among 41 punters included on the Ray Guy Award Watch List released by the Greater Augusta Sports Council in mid-September. Candidates for the award are evaluated not only on punting performance but also on excellence in the classroom and in the community.

The list will be narrowed to 10 semi-finalists in early November, with the award being presented live on ESPN on Dec. 6. Nebraska has not had a Ray Guy Award winner, since its inception in 2000. But the Cornhuskers' Kyle Larson was a finalist in 2003.

SOCCER SUCCESS

Husker goalkeeper Jessica Mills was named the Big 12 defensive soccer player of the week in late September. The freshman from Houston, Texas, recorded 11 saves and allowed just one goal in two matches, as the Huskers defeated St. Louis 5-1 and tied No. 12-ranked Florida 1-1. She did not allow the goal against St. Louis. Junior Aysha Jamani scored her first goal against St. Louis.



Jessica Mills

STORY CONTINUES

Joba Chamberlain's fairy-tale rise to the major leagues continued in late September. The former Cornhusker pitcher earned his first save for the New York Yankees - on his 22nd birthday, and with his dad, Harlan, at Yankee Stadium to see it. He got four outs to preserve a 7-5 victory against the Toronto Blue Jays. In the final week of the regular season, Chamberlain's record was 2-0 with a 0.42 earned-run average, with 31 strikeouts and only six walks in 21 2/3 innings.

SILVER FOR VERING

Former Cornhusker wrestler Brad Vering won a silver medal at the 2007 World Championships in Baku, Azerbaijan. Vering competed at 84 kilograms (185 pounds) in the Greco-Roman division. He lost in the finals to Russia's Aleksey Mishin, the 2004 Olympic champion.

IMPROVING

The Husker women's golf team finished sixth at the 18-team Ron Moore Intercollegiate at Highlands Ranch, Colo. Senior Elli Brown led the way, tying for 11th individually with a season-low 222 total. The team showed improvement from its first competition, according to coach Robin Krapfl. "Hopefully, we will learn that you have to stay aggressive if you want to produce great scores and win tournaments," she said. ■

CROSSWORD

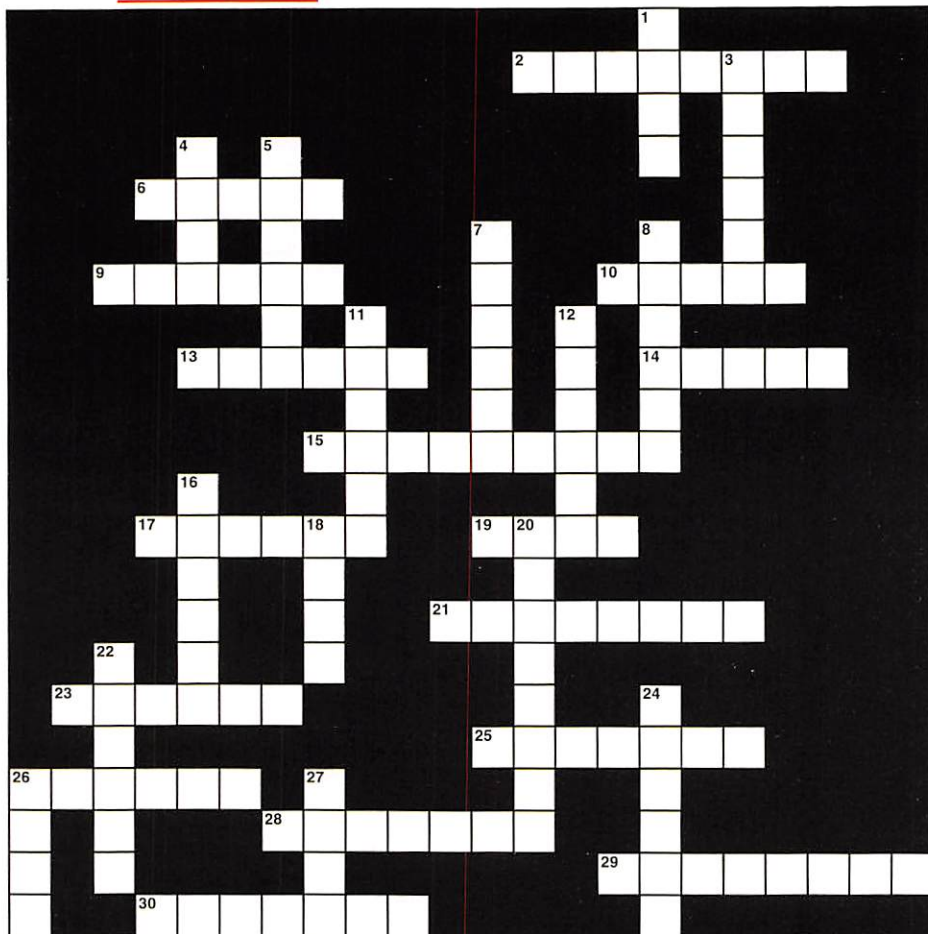
ACROSS

- 2 Missouri campus location
- 6 Safeties coach
- 9 Missouri head coach
- 10 Wears No. 7
- 13 Nov. 3 opponent
- 14 Wide receiver from Minnesota
- 15 Cornerbacks coach
- 17 Wears No. 98
- 19 Missouri school color
- 21 Wears No. 17
- 23 Wears No. 99
- 25 1997 Lombardi Award winner
- 26 Leading kickoff returner
- 28 New offensive line starters vs. Ball State
- 29 Linebackers coach
- 30 2006 tackles leader

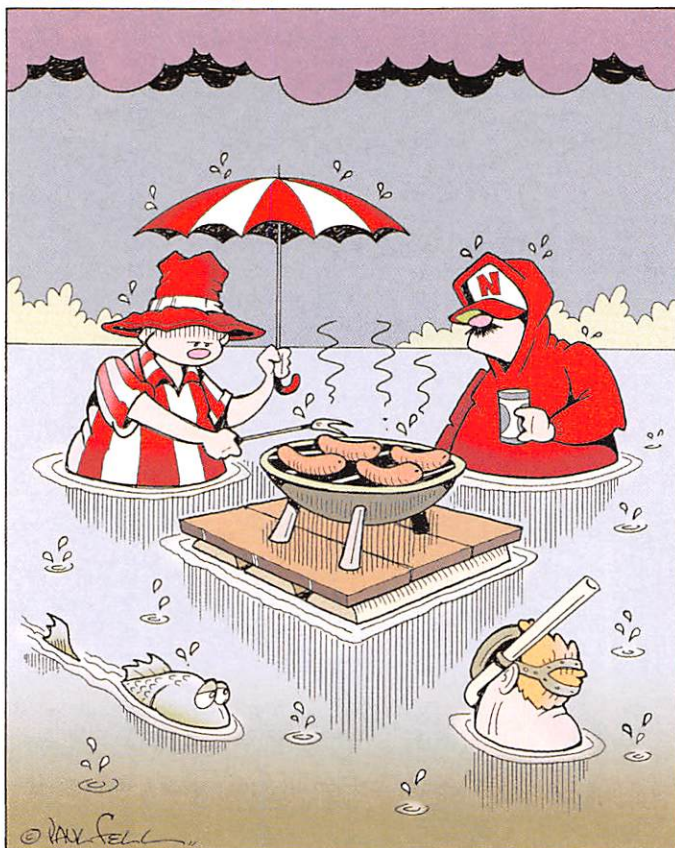
DOWN

- 1 Had interception vs. Ball State
- 3 Offensive co-captain
- 4 Wide receiver from Texas
- 5 2005 tackles leader
- 7 Missouri nickname
- 8 Quarterbacks coach
- 11 1997 Outland Trophy winner
- 12 Missouri quarterback
- 16 Defensive co-captain
- 18 Network for NU-Missouri game
- 20 Leading tackler vs. Ball State
- 22 Scored final touchdown vs. Ball State
- 24 Ndamukong Suh's home state
- 26 Backup quarterback
- 27 Caught long TD pass vs. Ball State

Answers in Oct. 13 issue



HUSKERNUTZ



A LITTLE WEATHER IS NO EXCUSE TO CANCEL A PERFECTLY GOOD TAILGATE PARTY.

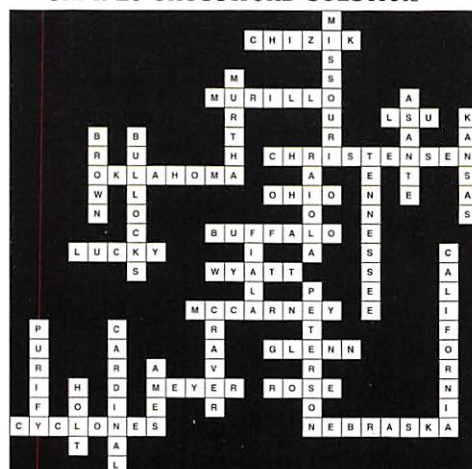
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SEPT. 29 CROSSWORD SOLUTION



10 YEARS Ago ...

Huskers Illustrated looks back at some of the top stories of 1997

**Oct. 18, 1997:
Volume 17, No. 12**

REDEFINING THE FULLBACK

Nebraska is showing a bigger package to defenses by getting more than just bulldozing blocks out of its other back.

RECRUITING: OFFENSIVE LINE COULD HAVE BLAND FUTURE

Nebraska hoping to sign Chillicothe, Mo., lineman/punter/special teams star to bolster offensive line.

OVERVIEW: HAVEN'T WE SEEN THIS BEFORE?

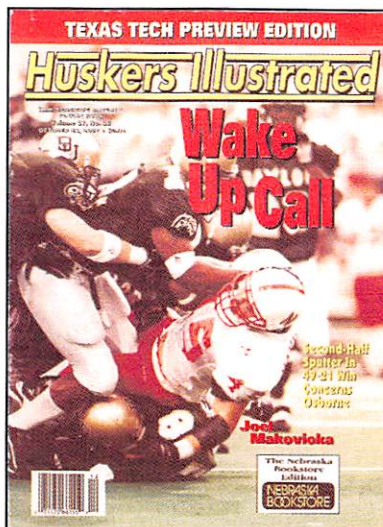
With five games under its belt, this season's defense is beginning to show the winning characteristics of the 1995 squad.

NEITHER RAIN NOR BAYLOR CAN STOP HUSKERS IN WACO

Tom Osborne was wet and weary. And he wasn't particularly pleased with Nebraska's 49-21 victory against Baylor at a rain-soaked Floyd Casey Stadium.

"I'm not looking for a big score," Osborne said. "I'm just kind of upset about the fact that we didn't finish off well. Normally, our second units play better than that."

The Cornhuskers, who went into the game ranked third



in both major polls, maintained their focus for two and a half quarters, according to Osborne, who was substituting liberally early in the second half.

That was among the positives in Nebraska's fifth victory, against an undermanned Baylor team. The Bears have only 68 scholarship players.

"We got a good chance to look at our second units," Osborne said.

Some of what he saw was cause for concern. "I didn't see what I'd like to see," he said. "We were just kind of disappointed in execution. You like to see execution."

A modest crowd of 38,175, held down by sporadic rain, saw plenty of offensive execution by Nebraska during the first half. The Cornhuskers had rolled up 42 points and 378 yards of offense by the

intermission.

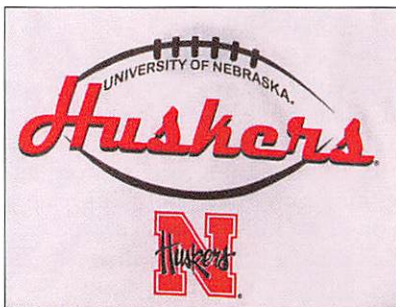
And junior I-back Ahman Green looked very much like a Heisman Trophy candidate, as he carried 18 times for 152 yards and four touchdowns in the first 21:43 of the game.

Had Cornhusker assistant head coach and running backs coach Frank Solich been willing to let Green play a significant amount the second half, there's no telling what the statistics would have looked like.

"Ahman would have had unbelievable numbers," Solich said.

As it was, Green's numbers were pushing that description. It was the second game in a row in which he scored four rushing touchdowns.

The four against Baylor came on runs of 3, 58, 2 and 30 yards. Green, who carried twice in the second half and finished with 158 yards rushing . . . ■



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FRONT

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Weird Week

A strange game was the culmination of a week of weirdness



Mike BABCOCK

THE PLAY HAD NO EFFECT on the game's outcome. But it was curious enough to warrant mention. Sam Keller pitched the ball to Joe Ganz, who tossed it back to Keller, laterally.

Keller was then supposed to pass the ball downfield. But the defensive end didn't bite.

"I don't know what he was doing, standing there," Keller said. "Joe threw it back to me, and I've got this guy coming up. Oh man, I had to tuck it and run. That was supposed to go

down the field.

"But you don't want to force any situations when they have it covered like that."

So early in the fourth quarter, with a 28-10 lead, Nebraska's quarterback put himself at risk of injury by running the ball. He gained 1 yard, and left press box observers scratching their heads.

Maybe it was something for Missouri to look at on film, someone suggested.

The undefeated Tigers are up next, at Columbia. They rested while Nebraska played.

Cornhusker coach Bill Callahan was interested in putting some things on film for Missouri's viewing pleasure. Keller made a couple of throws downfield, with a gusty wind behind him in the first quarter, for instance. The first, to speedy Frantz Hardy, went for 60 yards. The second was intercepted.

The game plan included "throwing the ball down the field a little bit more today, pushing people off us, really getting that on film for people to see that we can push some speed down the field, we can attack down the field," said Callahan. "I think it just helps you in your overall game."

OK, the Ganz-to-Keller throwback will give a defense pause, too, as will I-back Marlon Lucky's touchdown pass to H-back Sean Hill, who now leads the team with three touchdown catches.

But in the context of the 35-17 victory against Iowa State, those plays just added to the weirdness. And that's Callahan's word. "I just think it was a really strange game today, kind of weird in a lot of ways," he said. "They had the ball quite a bit. It was just kind of a strange game."

The Cyclones had the ball more than quite a bit. They ran 102 plays from scrimmage. That's six more than Nebraska ran in its 52-10 destruction of Nevada, and 36 more than USC ran in Lincoln.

The Cornhuskers ran 59 plays against Iowa State. "It was really weird," Keller said.

"That's the longest I've spent on the sideline in any game I've ever been in. I've said this before that games take on personalities. They take shape, completely different from other games."

Considering the play disparity, the shape probably should-

n't have been a W for Nebraska. "It's weird. But we're finding out we can thrive in different types of games," said Keller.

Actually, the weirdness didn't begin with the Iowa State kickoff. The Cornhuskers went through a week of weirdness, following their 41-40 victory against Ball State.

After the Ball State game, senior linebacker Steve Octavien, frustrated by fans booing the defense, said if they weren't going to support the home team, they might as well stay home.

At Tuesday's news conference, he apologized. "We feed off the crowd's energy, so it is very difficult in that aspect," he said. "I was just very emotional. I truly apologize for all the comments I made. We have great fans. It was just a mistake and something that was very un-Christian for me to say."

At the same news conference, senior linebacker Corey McKeon spent the better part of 30 minutes answering questions and baring his soul about the state of the Blackshirt defense.

"I know our defense. I know they're going to answer the call," he said. "Seeing Steve (Octavien) get fired up after the game, it really picked up some of our players. I'm excited."

He and Octavien then combined for 20 tackles against Iowa State.

McKeon also spoke in support of defensive coordinator Kevin Cosgrove, as had Octavien after the Ball State game. Cosgrove was assailed from all directions, fans and media alike.

But the team pulled together, according to Keller. "One thing I'm proud about this team and all the guys on it, we rally around each other," he said. "We took care of each other all week. There were a lot of things the defense went through,

Coach Coz and the defense, and they carried us today."

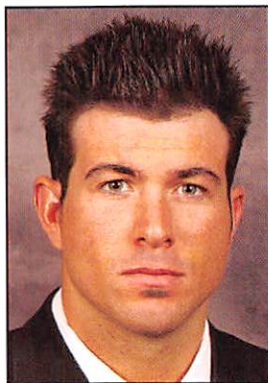
Carried? On first glance it might not have seemed so, having given up 415 yards. But those yards came on 102 plays, remember. "They were on the field so long," said Keller.

There was other weirdness in the game, such as the image of 6-foot-3, 310-pound Shukree Barfield running interference on Bo Ruud's interception return and the final play of the first half, when the Cornhuskers were in position for a short field goal to increase their lead to 17-10.

Nebraska was at the Cyclone 15-yard line with the clock stopped but no timeouts remaining. Keller took the snap, looked for a receiver and then instead of throwing the ball away to stop the clock with a couple of seconds left, he drove into the middle of the line.

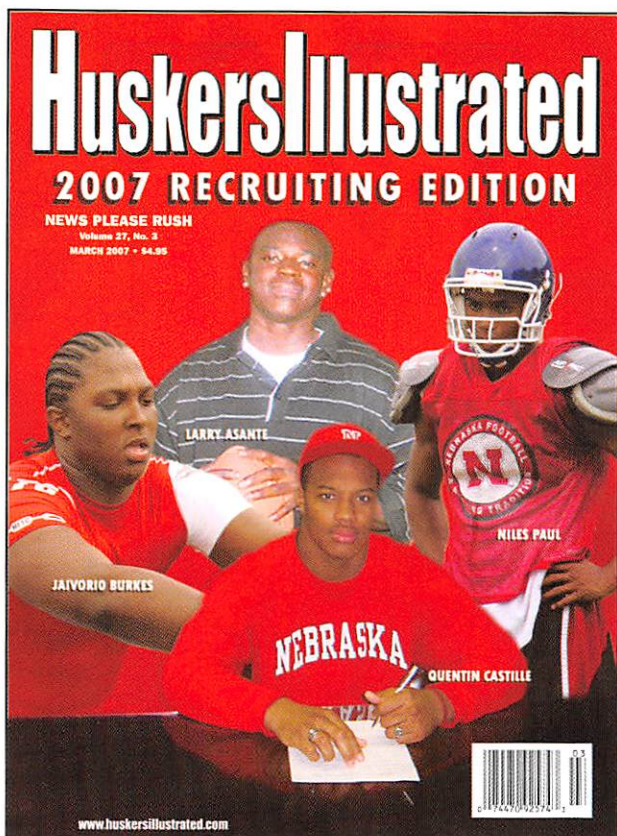
"I was thinking we had a timeout . . . I don't know what I was thinking," Keller said. "I was kicking myself at the end of that one. I know better than that."

Just a little more weirdness as it turned out. ■

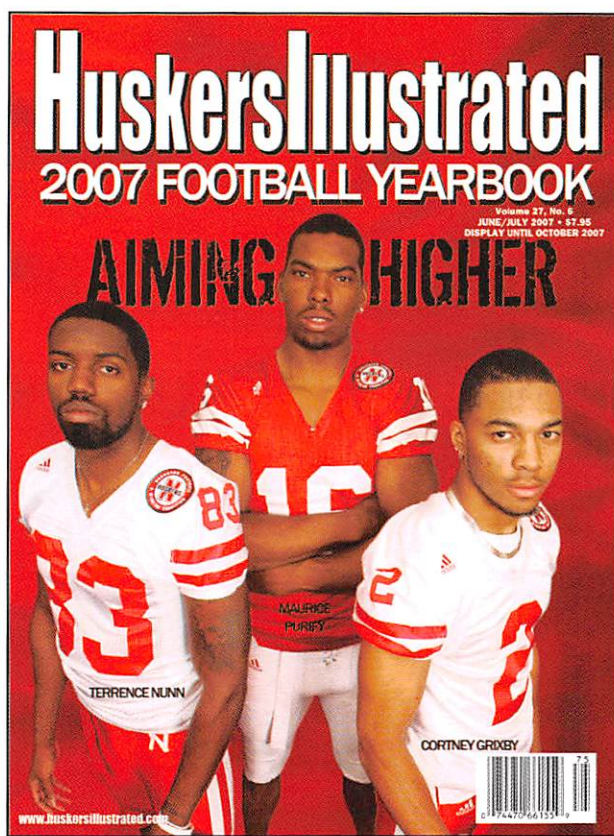


Senior Sam Keller passed for 219 yards and two touchdowns.

Mike Babcock is a former sports columnist for the Lincoln Journal Star. He has covered Nebraska football for nearly 30 years. Mike can be reached at MBABCOCK1@neb.rr.com or P.O. Box 6782, Lincoln, NE 68506.



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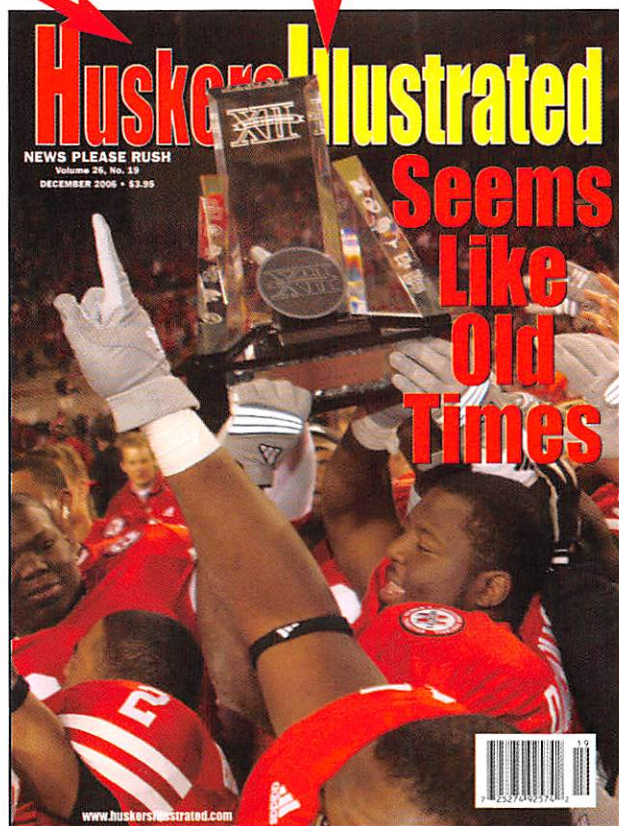
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